

THE DEAD CALYPSO
AND OTHER VERSES

LOUIS ALEXANDER ROBERTSON

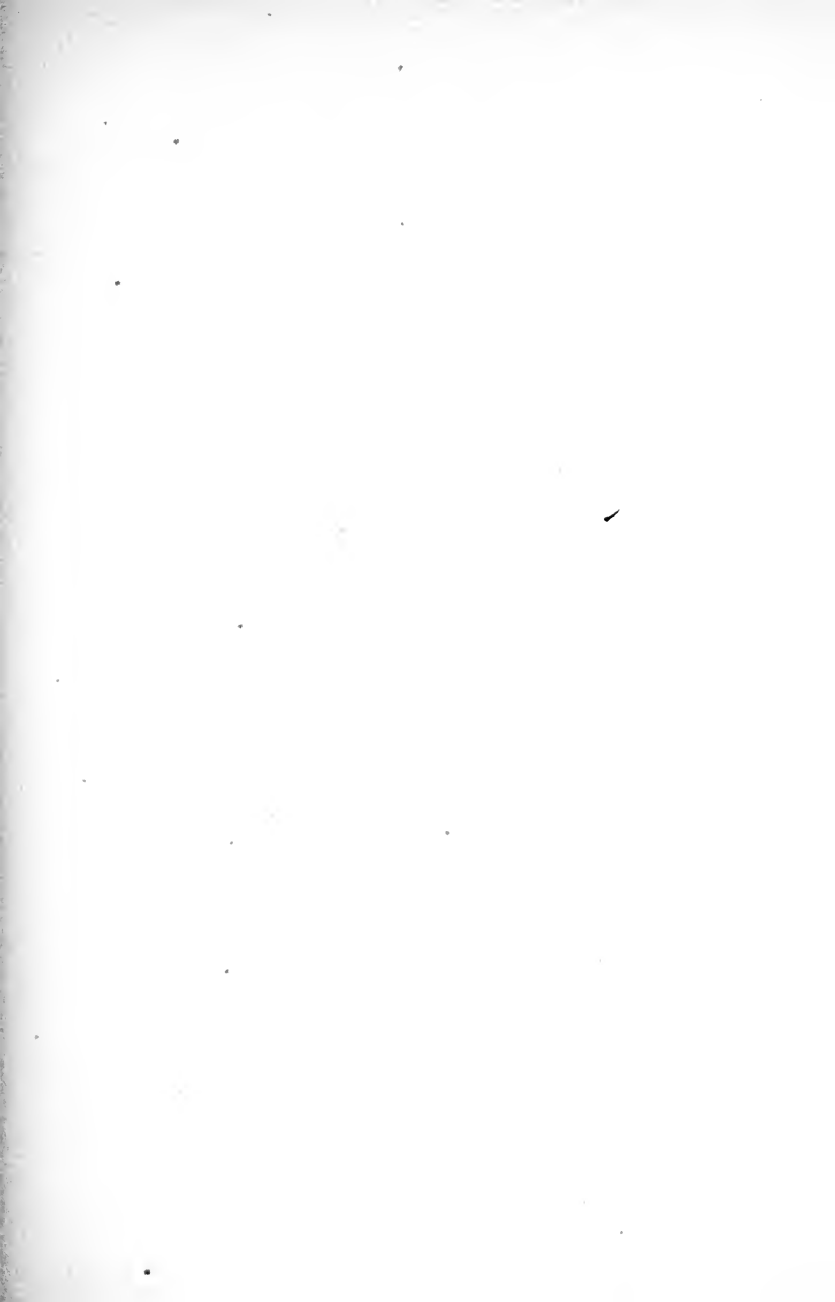
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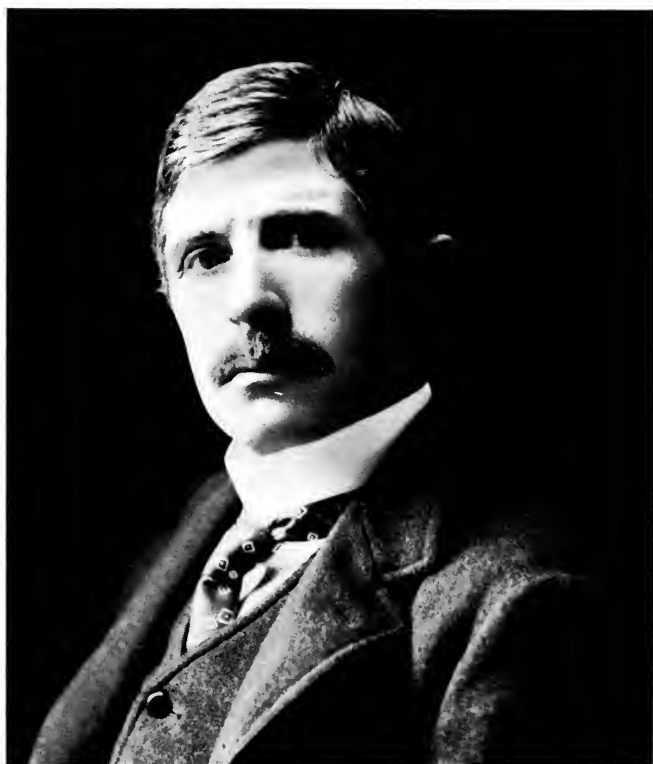
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THE DEAD CALYPSO
AND OTHER VERSES





Louis A. Robertson

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BY

LOUIS ALEXANDER ROBERTSON



SAN FRANCISCO

A. M. ROBERTSON

1901

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BY
LOUIS A. ROBERTSON

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WITH THE FOLLOWING LINES
I INSCRIBE THIS LITTLE BOOK TO

Sands W. Forman

BY WESTERN SHORES OF TRITON BLOWS
HIS SOUNDING SHELL ; AND SHE WHO ROSE
ALL WET AND WANTON FROM THE DEEP,
TO MAKE MAN'S PULSE WITH PASSION LEAP,
HERE ON THE WAVE IN BEAUTY GLOWS.

A HERD UPON THE HILLSIDE LOWS,
AND WHERE YON STREAM IN MUSIC FLOWS,
THERE PAN IS PIPING TO HIS SHEEP,
BY WESTERN SHORES.

HERE VINE-CROWNED BACCHUS DOTH REPOSE,
AND NYMPHS AND SATYRS, LIKE TO THOSE
OF TEMPE, FROM THE COPSES PEEP ;
WHY FOR THE FABLED LOTUS WEEP,
WHEN 'NEATH THE POPPY WE MAY DOZE,
BY WESTERN SHORES ?



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THE DEAD CALYPSO

WHERE be thy witcheries now, woman of wonderful beauty,

Priestess of profligate love, passionless, pallid and still?

Sweet was the soul-searing cult taught by thy liberal kisses,

Sweeter the chalice of love formed by thy sensuous mouth,

Ripe as the rapturing grape, rich as the rose in its redness,

But unto them that did drink fatal as waters of death.

Left unto thee are the dregs, bitter and biting as wormwood,

Freezing the blood in thy veins, leaving thee rigid and cold.

THE DEAD CALYPSO

Strange that those lewd lava lips, once so alluring
and mocking,
Wear such an innocent smile, chaste as a maiden's in sleep!
Nay, but they wither and change, livid they
seem unto blueness,
Shrunk in their soft silken skin, as when the
tropical sun
Drinking the life of the grape, leaves it abandoned and shriveled,
Gibbeted on its own vine, swinging like felon
forgot.

Almost again do I hear thy voice and its passionate pleading,
Soft as the musical moan of waves in a murmuring shell,
Luring and leading me on to a haven that shone
like a heaven,

THE DEAD CALYPSO

Bright with a promise of peace, fair as a rhapsodist's dream,

Misted with halos of gold, yet but a vanishing splendor

Miraged in exquisite grace over a desert of death.

But when youth's passionate pulse pleads with its eager insistence,

When the white waiting snows of the heart melt with the breath of the spring,

When the clamoring currents of life leap with ineffable joyance,

Where is the hand that can point to the channels through which they shall run,—

Whether through vistas of peace, till lost in love's infinite ocean,

Or on through dark intricate ways to mix with the silt of the sewer?

THE DEAD CALYPSO

Dead is the light in thine eyes, yet recollection
 beholds them

Mirrored like stars of the night in the face of a
 flood that is calm,

Then losing themselves in the deep, when the
 breath of the gathering tempest

Lashes the slumbering wave till it leaps to the
 lowering skies.

Thus when thy senses were drowned in thy
 passion's exuberant triumph,

Leaving the lures of thy lips have I looked on
 thy wondering eyes,

Swooning away into white, as when the rays of
 the morning

Chase the black shadows of night back to their
 caverns of gloom.

Oft have I seen them revolve, slowly and dream-
 ily turning

THE DEAD CALYPSO

Into thy love-laden brain, there passion's secret
to find;

Leaving their opaline orbs blind in the trance
that enthralled them,

Till the long kiss that I gave coaxed the lost
irises back.

Now, under curtains of wax, lustreless crescents
of whiteness,

Cold as the frost on the pane, hint of those
rapturous hours.

Where is their luminous gleam, which, like the
treacherous beacons

Lighted by wreckers to lure the mariner on to
his doom,

O'er life's unpiloted sea shone with a bale and a
beauty,

Till the poor credulous bark dashed on the rock
of thy heart?

THE DEAD CALYPSO

Season of spring, when the blood quickened to
life in the pulses,

And, murmuring, sighed with delight and laughed
at the prospect of death!

Summer that seethed in the veins, with its
grapes growing richer and redder,

Till in a wine-press of sorrow the dregs of the
vintage were found!

When all thy sepulchred past, on the rack of an
exquisite passion,

Gave up its secrets of old in thy voiceless but
voluble vows;

Then to thy lust-leavened lips rose the lees of a
thousand caresses

That artifice could not disguise, nor fraud into
fealty frame.

Swiftly the meshes of silk were spun into steel,
but I lingered,

THE DEAD CALYPSO

Fondling the fetters I feared, yet fearing to fling
them away.

Lost to the lips I had loved, yet with the thirst
of a drunkard

Draining the draught that enslaved, e'en while
the spirit recoiled.

Day after day, as the scales fell from mine eyes,
I beheld thee,

Garbed in the glamour of lust, rise from the
ashes of love ;

Night after night, though thy beauty oft baffled
my fears and beguiled me,

Soon every sigh seemed to breathe naught but a
sibilant hiss,

Or but the laugh of a fiend that rang in mine
ears till I left thee,

To come at the last and to lay the lips that
forgive on thy brow.

THE DEAD CALYPSO

Long, long ago, in the past, did the daughters
of earth, with their beauty,
Lure from the heavens above the white-pinioned
Children of God;
Why should I wonder that thou, O fairest and
frailest of women,
Didst with thy sorceries bind the souls and the
bodies of men?

Where are thy worshipers now, they who did
pant to embrace thee?
Where is the homage they poured once in those
death-deafened ears?
Where is the word that could waken thee now,
O voluptuous sleeper;
Or the gold that could bribe thee to break thy
last lover's lethal embrace?

THE SONNET

As OFTEN in some grand and ancient fane
A devotee will kneel him down to pray
At one familiar shrine day after day,
And to his guardian saint his woes complain;
There, while his fingers tell the beaded chain,
His soul in ecstasy drifts far away,
Till back returning with the vesper strain,
It enters once again its home of clay.

So in the cloistered corridors of song
There is one altar where I love to kneel;
Though humblest of the worshipers who throng
Its narrow space, yet there I often steal,
And in the Sonnet's sacred chalice pour
My tears and sighs until I weep no more.

THROUGH PAINTED PANES

(RONDEAU)

THROUGH painted panes a glory flows,
And over aisle and altar throws
 Soft floods of crimson, blue, and gold,
 Till silent forms, in sculpture stoled,
Seem waking from a long repose.

Ah, how the tinted marble glows !
For every cheek now wears a rose,
 And each white face seems aureoled
 Through painted panes.

These weird word-weavers who disclose
Strange things to us in rhyme or prose,
 Who conjure up the dead and cold,
 Or Life's great varied page unfold,
Their art is but a light that shows
 Through painted panes.

THE MAN IS NOTHING, THE WORK
IS ALL

(DOUBLE BALLADE)

THIS world is but a noisy show,
A mighty, motley masquerade,
Where countless actors come and go,
A tragedy and gasconade,
Where many puzzling parts are played ;
Till curtained with Death's dusty pall,
And in Time's testing balance weighed,
The man is nothing, the work is all.

THE MAN IS NOTHING, THE WORK IS ALL

Forward they press, both high and low,
And rich and poor, and gay and staid;
Some climb where Fame's fair mountains glow,
While others grovel in the glade;
But when, at last, the sexton's spade
Hath built the bed to which they crawl,
When requiems roll and prayers are prayed,
The man is nothing, the work is all.

Though rivers red as crimson flow
Beneath the shot-torn barricade;
Though on the clay of fallen foe
Thrones have been reared with reeking blade;
Still war is but a sorry trade,
And often but a murderous brawl;
For even Glory's gleam will fade,—
The man is nothing, the work is all.

THE MAN IS NOTHING, THE WORK IS ALL

Fate's shuttle flashes to and fro,
And many curious webs are made ;
For Fortune may her smile bestow,
And light some dullard through the shade
To where Fame's glittering prize is paid ;
While Genius oft doth drink Life's gall,
Of flouting Fortune unafraid,—
The man is nothing, the work is all.

In vilest soil the seed may grow,
For many a living germ hath strayed
Where sower never meant to sow ;
The heart of reckless renegade
Hath been ere this a shrine where swayed
Truth's sacred censer, letting fall
The spark, oft slighted, oft obeyed,—
The man is nothing, the work is all.

THE MAN IS NOTHING, THE WORK IS ALL

To some misleading guides we owe
Lights that have made us retrograde ;
While others up Time's ramparts throw
For us a shining escalade,
By which we shall at last invade
Truth's glorious and eternal hall ;
Or fair, or foul, in Life's crusade,
The man is nothing, the work is all.

ENVOY

Whene'er we glory or upbraid
The good or bad, the great or small,
This maxim may our judgment aid,—
The man is nothing, the work is all.

EVOLUTION

MYSTICAL Dream of Creation !

Problem of Dark Evolution !

Tell us the world's early story,

Life's hidden secret unfold.

Vain is each wild speculation,

Groping in gloom for solution,

Enough that from darkness sprang glory,

Sunrise in crimson and gold.

EVOLUTION

Mounting the stream of the ages,
Up to its sources of mystery,
Threading its channels uncertain,
What, after all, have we won?
Blank were the world's early pages,
Buried in myth was its history,
Long after earth's misty curtain
Glowed with the light of the sun.

Still in the quarried tradition,
Still in the ice-graven story,
Still in the rock-written fable,
Linger the throes of thy birth ;
Marking thy growth and transition,
Back in the centuries hoary,
Legends that teach and enable
Thy children to know thee, O Earth !

EVOLUTION

Nebulous waif of obscurity,
On through immensity stealing,
Wandering child of the forces,
Dropped from the matrix of night ;
Fashioning thyself to maturity,
Sphering and fusing, annealing,
Through the dark centuries' courses,
Drifting along to the light.

Chaos all order confounding,
Yet ever silently speeding
On with instinctive elusion,
Steadily holding thy way ;
Darkness primeval abounding,
Down through the æons unheeding,
Still amid murky confusion
Blundering on to the day.

EVOLUTION

Thundered a mandate through heaven,
 "Let there be light," and the vapors,
 Losing themselves in the ocean,
 Mingled again with the deep ;
Then followed morning and even,
Night lit her pale distant tapers,
 Order was born of commotion,
 Earth was awakened from sleep.

 Laboring in primal gestation,
 Life in its forms multifarious,
 Eager to meet the sun's kisses,
 Leaped in her womb with delight ;
Weary of long nidulation,
Up from their wallows luttarous,
 Up from their darksome abysses,
 Swarmed the strange brood of the night.

EVOLUTION

Life in fantastic variety,
Breeding and battling and dying,
Struggling for very existence,
Rending with fang and with nail ;
Death, never gorged with satiety,
Over the massacre flying,
Blind to the light in the distance,
Deaf to the song in the gale.

Type against type for survival,
Through the long ages contending,
All for supremacy striving,
Man, as the master, they own ;
Brute of the brutes, without rival,
Up from the conflict ascending,
Scheming, coercing, contriving,
Building the steps to his throne.



EVOLUTION

Fatuous child of mortality,
Swaddled in dark superstition,
Groping thy way through obscurity,
Stumbling, but stumbling to rise ;
Casting aside animality,
Girding thyself with ambition,
Fearlessly facing futurity,
Scaling the steeps of the skies.

Race against race for dominion,
Creed against creed for conviction,
Throne against throne for subversion,
Moving like puppets at play ;
Battling to force an opinion,
Bleeding to follow a fiction,
Dying with instant reversion,
To mingle again in the fray.

EVOLUTION

Many a crimson libation,
 Poured on barbarian altars
 Freer and faster than water,
 Purples thy triumph with shame ;
Many a lurid oblation,
 Smoking to priest-prated psalters,
 Many a monster of slaughter
 Fiddling a kingdom to flame.

Many a Moloch of cruelty,
 Many a Tophet infernal,
 Hope, after gory baptism,
 Flung to the funeral pyre ;
But with death-scorning credulity,
 Pluming its pinions eternal,
 Up from the murderous abysm,
 Springing like phoenix from fire.

EVOLUTION

Dross of the brute disappearing,
Lost in the burning purgation,
Leaving the spirit less weighted,
Less overburdened with clay ;
On to the light ever faring,
Toiling in endless gradation,
Lower to higher translated,
Rising from darkness to day.

Many a sacred Thermopylæ
Hurling defiance at slavery ;
Many a crucified martyr
Dying for love of his kind ;
Tyranny, kingcraft, monopoly,
Yielding to justice and bravery,
Liberty's blood-blazoned charter
Many a despot hath signed.

EVOLUTION

Many a conquest of Science
Shaming the warrior's sabre ;
Many a triumph of morals,
Wisdom and Mercy and Love ;
Many a blade of defiance
Forged to the ploughshare of labor ;
Many a chaplet of laurels
Wreathed with the olive above.

Height after height thou hast taken,
Yet there are others remaining,
Far in the pure empyrean
Truth's shining battlements rise ;
Scale them with courage unshaken,
Death and disaster disdaining,
Storm them with jubilant pæan,
Capture the gates of the skies.

EVOLUTION

Then shall all ills of mortality
Unto thy wisdom surrender ;
Knowledge supreme and supernal,
Leaving no summit to scale ;
Truth, in her white-robed reality,
Opening her portals of splendor,
Yielding her treasures eternal,
Lifting Obscurity's veil.

ART

THOU breathest on the cold insensate stone,
And lo ! it throbs with immortality ;
The canvas, with thy conjuring pigments strown,
Glow with a beauty that will never die ;
The deepest fountains of the heart run dry,
When o'er the trembling strings thy hand is
thrown,
And when we hear thy tongue's rich sorcery,
We know not why we laugh, or weep, or moan.

We know not why, nor do we care to know
Where rise the waters of that mystic stream
Whose current bears us onward in its flow,
Till, all unconscious of the clay, we seem
To feel the breath of an ambrosial breeze,
And drift far, far away o'er sapphire seas.

THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE

(DOUBLE BALLADE)

SINCE we, like all before,
Must quickly pass away,
'T is idle to deplore,
Or weep above decay ;
Since all who breathe obey
And bend to Fate's decree,
This promise be your stay,—
The Truth shall make you free.

THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE

This freedom bought with gore,
These shrines at which you pray,
Your books with all their lore,
Do they the gift convey?
The centuries answer, Nay,
But all the years to be
Roll back an echoing Yea,
The Truth shall make you free.

To gloomy gods of yore
Why adoration pay?
Zeus, Isis, Buddha, Thor,
All pass like common clay;
Before the bright'ning day
Their night-born shadows flee,
Till under Reason's sway
The Truth shall make you free.

THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE

Ah, cruel to the core,
The creeds that once did slay ;
When rack with torture tore,
Or red auto-da-fé
Did 'round its victims play ;
A martyred Christ their plea
To brand and burn and flay,—
The Truth shall make you free.

Though Superstition hoar,
With all the ages gray,
Should bid you tread once more
The paths that lead astray,
You 'll never gang a-gley
For beldams such as she ;
Nous avons tout changé,
The Truth shall make you free.

THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE

When cannon cease to roar,
When bugles cease to bray,
When nations never war,
When all your skies display
One circling rainbow ray,
'Round every land and sea,
Earth's sister stars shall say
The Truth hath made you free.

ENVOY

Her temple stands for aye,
There boldly bend the knee ;
She speaks not to betray,—
The Truth shall make you free.

THOU UNSEEN HARP

THOU Unseen Harp, that hanged in the skies,
Chorded with beams that stretch from star to
star,

Thy deep vibrations reach me from afar,
For every mighty string in music sighs
Till night's dark dome is filled with symphonies.

O starry midnight hymns ! to me ye are
A comfort and a hope ; no cloud shall bar
Nor dawn defraud me of the faith that flies
On climbing wing across the bridgeless night,
To where the din and discord of the day
Can never reach. Dear faces that I know,
And sweet familiar words, my soul invite,
Till all forgotten is the shackling clay
That binds me to this troublous scene below.

THE WANDERER

THE old cathedral bells sound sweet and clear,
And as I listen to their well-known peal
A thousand thronging recollections steal
Across the gulf of many a vanished year.
At last I stand a wayworn wanderer
Within Thy temple, God, and almost feel
The presence of the dead, and as I kneel
Sweet angel voices mingle with my prayer.

The bells are hushed ; the mighty organ rolls
Majestic music through the gloomy fane ;
A happy chorus of triumphant souls
With hallelujahs swell the sacred strain ;
A light celestial fills my streaming eyes,
A Jacob's ladder reaching to the skies.

DREAMS

THOU Shoreless Sea, I love thy murmuring song
That soothes to slumber with its drowsy strain ;
O'er thy wide waters drifts the helmless brain,
Manned with fantastic phantoms that belong
To Sleep's weird world, and which around me
throng,

Till with the dawning day their shadows wane.
To bind them on this page with inky chain,
'T would need an art as apt, a pen as strong
As his who drew that mighty mutineer,
Who 'gainst the God of Heaven did rebel,
Then from those ramparts plunged forever-
more.

Or his who trod the regions of despair
With Virgil's shade, and did their depths
explore,
And calmly talked with monstrous shapes
in hell.

WHEN DREAMS DERIDE

(RONDEAU)

WHEN dreams deride, and Fancy's train
Throngs to enthrone her in the brain ;
 When Reason, ruler of the day,
 Her sober sceptre down doth lay,
To leave her sister free to reign :

Then Memory builds a wondrous fane,
Her organ rolls a mimic strain,
 And through the Past's dim aisles I stray,
 When dreams deride.

Ah, fictioned fabric ! it were vain
Thy weird devotions to explain ;
 Oft in thy shadowy shrine I pray
 That sleep might steal my soul away
Some morn before thy cloisters wane,
 When dreams deride.

ICEBERG

LAUNCHED on the bleak waste of the polar sea,
Where fitful borealis splendors shine,
How like thou art to some majestic shrine,
Drifting in silence to its destiny !
O frozen, floating minster ! over thee
The sunset throws a glory half divine ;
Spellbound we wonder at thy chaste design,
And in a rapture almost bend the knee.

We seem to hear a pealing anthem roll
Across the surface of the moaning tide,
And from thy spires a solemn requiem toll,
As on to dissolution thou dost glide,
Cradled where rolls the dark, cold arctic wave,
To find at last in tropic seas a grave.

HOVE-TO

BAFFLED, but bravely, like a stag at bay,
She faced the driving gale and angry sea ;
Under short canvas and with helm a-lee,
Hove-to, upon the starboard tack, she lay,
And looked into the wind's wild eye that day ;
Over the great green rolling billows she
Rode like a storm-bird, and did seem to be
A mist-born phantom rising from the spray.

Her tightened weather-shrouds rang like a lyre,
Swept by the furious storm-king as he passed ;
Wild ocean wraiths wailed in the thundering
choir,

A thousand demons shrieked in every blast ;
Yet better thus to battle with the gale,
Than drift o'er glassy seas with listless sail.

THE CALIFORNIA REDWOODS

ERE over Nilus' waking wave the strain
Of Memnon's morning melody was blown ;
Ere Cheops from his quarries clove the stone
And piled his pyramid on Egypt's plain ;
And later — ere the God-projected fane
Of Solomon had into grandeur grown ;
Before the glory of the Greek was known,
Or Romulus the she-wolf's dugs did drain ;

We stood in youth where now in age we stand,
Colossal types of Life, that closer climb
To clasp the stars, than any living thing.
Ye cherish crumbling temples that were planned
In Dian's day, yet deem it not a crime
Our older glory in the dust to fling.

DIALECT VERSE

I LIKE not overmuch the verse that's set
In the rough rustic language of the hind ;
Though here and there a fragrant bud we find
Hidden among such weeds. The violet,
Blue as the skies, with dewy crystals wet,
With rankest growths hath often been entwined;
But Art could never thus herself forget,
As in one wreath the fair and foul to bind.

The poor provincial's patois may be strong
With the rude eloquence that stirs the soul ;
But when in raucous rhyme, or senseless song,
The uncouth verbs and nouns together roll
In tangled tropes — then must I turn away,
And let the yokel's sponsor have his say.

THE TUNELESS TYRO

A SLEEPING moth upon a window-pane
May hide the brightest star that lights the
gloom ;
A buzzing insect in a quiet room
May drown the thunder of the distant main ;
The fetid, fen-fed breezes may profane
The fragrance of the fairest buds that bloom ;
So Art's antitheses do sometimes loom
Large for a moment, then—to nothing wane.

Poor Tuneless Tyro ! with the clod-clogged
feet,—
Groaning beneath an overwhelming weight
Of bad bucolics,—thou wilt linger long
At Fame's closed portals, and there vainly bleat
Thy socialistic sermons ; for that gate
Yields only to the voice of deathless song.

THE REFORMED TRANSFORMED

OFT have I seen the drunkard full arrayed
In all the rigor of the Rechabite,
Walking with face uplifted to the light,
Sure in the conquest that his soul hath made ;
Oft have I seen the resolution fade
From out his eyes, and marked in them the
 blight
Of baffled purpose, as the fiends of night
Shrieked to recall the righteous renegade.

Oh ! when I see the lips that Time hath taught
To triumph o'er the banished bane begin
To palter with the poison, then I say
That he who knows the dice are loaded ought
To murmur never if he fail to win
When Satan with him for his soul doth play.

JOB

MAJESTIC Mourner ! when thy spirit moaned
Itself to music on thy wondrous page ;
When thy great sorrowing soul in anguish
groaned,
And when Fate flung to thee her galling gage,
Oh ! what a soul-sustaining heritage
Was hidden in the fortitude that owned
How vain and weak it were a war to wage
With Him, the Lord, who sits in heaven
enthroned.

Thy flesh was fed to foulness, Sorrow clad
Thy soul with sackcloth, and thy forehead
frowned
With the black ashes of a heart consumed ;
But through it all, O Man of Uz, thy sad
But sure philosophy thy trials crowned
With perfect peace that out of patience
bloomed.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

OUR Heavenly Father, unto Thee we pour
Our constant prayers, and bless Thy hallowed
Name !

Come in Thy kingdom, God, and now pro-
claim

The age of peace to last forevermore.

In every land, from distant shore to shore,
Through all the earth Thy blessed will be
done,

As where, in heaven, before Thy shining
throne,

Thy saints and seraphs ceaselessly adore.

Give us, O God, each day our daily bread ;

Forgive us now, as others we forgive ;

Guide our weak feet that they may never tread

Temptation's paths, and teach us how to live,
That, by Thy power, we from the tomb shall rise
And share Thy glorious kingdom in the skies.

VIA CRUCIS

THOU thorn-crowned God of Glory !
Rejected Nazarene !
I often read Thy story,
And linger o'er each scene,
Till, with rapt wonder gazing,
Mine eyes behold afar,
Above Thy cradle blazing,
The Magi's pilot star.

VIA CRUCIS

Back through the night of ages
I tread the faith-lit way,
And with the seers and sages
My adoration pay.
With them I kneel and ponder
Why Thou foredoomed shouldst be
Through all Thy life to wander,
But always toward the tree.

The distant, dismal rafter
Did o'er Thy childhood throw
A shadow which thereafter
Stood forth a cross of woe ;
No sound of mirth or gladness
Was heard through all Thy years ;
Thy life was full of sadness,
Thy cup was filled with tears.

VIA CRUCIS

Yet in Thy love revealing
A mercy all could claim,
Sustaining, cheering, healing
The sick, the blind, the lame ;
Consoling and forgiving,
Thy hands above them spread,—
O Lips that cheered the living !
O Voice that waked the dead !

Yet sorrow was Thy guerdon,
And grief was ever near,
And mindful of the burden
That Thou wert doomed to bear,
Through gathering gloom extended
Thy path of pain, until
Thy bleeding footsteps wended
Up Calvary's dark hill.

VIA CRUCIS

Through darkness there directing
The way that Thou must go,
Its shadow still reflecting
Along Thy path of woe,
The ancient auguration,
Fulfilled, at last doth rise
In black-sparred consummation,
To lift Thee to the skies.

Thy breaking heart presages
The end that now is nigh ;
But soon, O Light of Ages
And Dayspring from on high,
Through clouds of glory cleaving,
Thy soul shall find the light,
Behind Thee ever leaving
Darkness and death and night.

CHRISTMAS SONNET

FAITH-FOUNDED Vision of the Manger, rise
In all thy humble glory and unfold
Time's dusty leaves, until thy page of gold
Shines through the ages on our wondering eyes.
From out the starry silence of the skies
A mighty flood of harmony is rolled,
Once more the song is sung, the story told,
And cradled on the earth a Saviour lies.

What priests and prophets did with faith foretell,
We, looking backward, with clear eyes can see
The thorn-crowned God forsake His throne
above ;
We hear the chorus, but we hear as well
The midnight moan in dark Gethsemane,
And sink o'erwhelmed beneath His bound-
less love.

THE CROSS-CROWNED CAIRN

A WHISPERED prayer, a stone with reverent hand
Laid near a cross that on a cairn doth stand,—
This and no more; no fragrant buds to wreath
A garland for the silent dead beneath;
No requiem rolling on the desert air
To guide us to the lonely sleeper there;
No rudely written legend to proclaim
His birth, his death, his country, age, or name;
Yet never vault, from dark Machpelah's cave,
Where Israel's primal Patriarch found a grave;
Nor yet the dome that Artemisia raised
O'er Caria's king, at which a world amazed
In wonder stood; nor Gizeh's gloomy pile,
Housing the haughtiest Pharaoh by the Nile;
Nor sacred shrine, nor quiet cloistered fane,
Wherein the proudest dust of earth hath lain,

THE CROSS-CROWNED CAIRN

E'er sent a softer slumber than these stones
That shelter from the sun a wanderer's bones.

The prayers we pray, our dirges of distress,
'Neath carven arch, or in the wilderness,
What are they to the dead? Oh, who can say
Where the dread Spoiler pauses,—if the clay
Alone surrenders to his blighting breath,
Or whether down the sombre stream of death,
The spirit, drifting into darkness, dies,
As did this flesh beneath these burning skies?

It is not so! The Symbol that doth keep
Its lonely vigil on yon stony heap
Is eloquent, and tells of Him who first
Did through Death's black, unbroken barriers
burst;
Of Him on whom a world hath learnt to lean,
And from the darkest hours of grief to glean

THE CROSS-CROWNED CAIRN

The Hope that helps when other comforts fail,
The Faith that falters not before the veil,
The Love that prays — in every Christian land,
When in the presence of the dead we stand —
That though the dreamless dust may never wake,
The soul may somewhere see the morning break.

THE ROCK OF AGES

I AM the Babe that in the manger lay,
The mystic offspring of the mother-maid ;
I am the Christ whose pale and suffering clay
Was the great price for man's salvation paid ;
I am the God to whom a world has prayed
For nineteen hundred years. I am the Way,
The Truth, the Life, the comfort and the stay,
To whom despairing mortals look for aid.

Faith-faggots, kindled in the furious light
Of bigot hate, like wrecking beacons gleam
Across the crimson waves that beat Time's
shore ;
But through the wildest storm and darkest night
I stand the Rock of Ages, and My beam
Leadeth and saveth those whose hearts are
pure.

THE NAZARENE

A MANGER-CRADLED Child, His mother near,
And one they call His father standing by,
Shepherds and Magi, with the gifts they bear,
An angel-chorus rolling through the sky,—
Once more the sacred mystery we scan,
And wonder if the Christ be God's best gift to
man.

Pale, patient Pleader for the poor and those
Whose hearts are homes of sorrow and of
pain,
Thy voice is as a balm for all their woes ;
Through twenty centuries it calleth plain
As when it breathed the invitation blest,—
Ye weary, come to Me, and I will give you rest.

THE NAZARENE

We mark Thy miracles, but would not bring
Them to the test of Reason's crucible.

What profit were it such full faith to fling
To unbelief's wild winds? Oh, who can
tell

The sacred secrets hidden by the veil
That Reason cannot rend nor mortal man assail?

Why should we doubt that Thou didst walk
the wave,

That Thou didst still the storm on Galilee,
That Thou didst summon Lazarus from his
grave,

Or mad'st the leper clean, the blind to see?
Oh, for the faith that hath the power to burn
Bright through these skeptic mists, though Reason
from it turn !

THE NAZARENE

But most we love Thee for the voice that
blessed

The little children when they came to Thee,
And for the human heart within Thy breast

That beat for all, but bled for misery ;
And for the hand stretched down in love to
greet,

That lifted back to life the woman of the street.

For things like these our hearts can under-
stand,—

All, all is human, nothing doth beguile ;
But Thy great deeds such credence do demand
That Faith and Reason fail to reconcile.

Is that within our breasts a fabled hope ?
Oh, leave it undisturbed, lest in the gloom we
grope !

THE NAZARENE

Fond fictions of our faith ! though Science turn
Her searchlight on the past, and Reason
scorn,
What comfort give they when the soul doth
yearn
For that pure peace that passeth all things
born
Of human knowledge? Then Thy mystic birth,
Thy life, Thy love, Thy death declare Thy
saving worth.

Then let the wrecking infidel proclaim
His creedless course o'er Life's uncertain sea.
What knows he of the faith that Thou didst
frame,
That falters not to face eternity?
The grave, his gloomy goal, is but a door
Through which we pass to life, as Thou didst
pass before.

THE NAZARENE

Reason may seek to ruin, Science scorn,
But that great love of Thine hath made us
wise
In wisdom not of understanding born,
That bids us turn to Thee with longing eyes
And outstretched hands. We know that Thou
art He,
Nor do we seek a sign, as did the Pharisee.

Sweet festival that bringeth back once more
The golden dreams of childhood, let us turn
Like little children to the Christmas lore
That once did hold us spellbound, till we
learn
Again the lesson of Thy love ; for we
Must be like children, Lord, ere we can come to
Thee.

GOLGOTHA

(A SONNET OF THE CROSS)

MORN hid her face, and day was backward rolled,
Mysterious rumblings shook the sacred hill,
In ghastly wonder there, shrouded and chill,
Uprose the dead, Christ's passing to behold ;
Waked stalkers, from your couches in the mould
Weird miracles ye saw, portending ill ;
God's days of flesh were o'er, His moments told,
A prayer groaned through His lips, then all
was still.

His crown of thorns, His bleeding hands and
feet,
That fatal drain sped by the soldier's spear,
A fountain whence Mercy's encrimsoned tide

GOLGOTHA

Flows free to all ; one short forgiving prayer,
Then soared His soul ; man's ransom was
complete,
The world's great price was paid when
Christos died.

The Saviour's last words, "My God ! My God ! why hast Thou forsaken me ?" with the exception of the word "why" are woven into the above sonnet, in regular order, and form a cross. As only twenty-eight letters could be used, the word referred to was omitted.

Begin with the first letter of the first line, then the second of the second, the third of the third, and so on up to the fourteenth of the fourth; then the first of the fourth, the second of the third, and back in like manner to the fourth of the first.

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD

SUPREME, Unknown, whom yet we trace
But dimly through a darkened glass,
When shall the mists that hide Thee pass,
And we behold Thee face to face?

For countless ages we have trod
The lower trails that lead to Thee;
Now on the distant heights we see
The banners of the hosts of God.

A thousand gods have we confessed,
And warped our worship age by age,
Creed blotting creed from off the page,
An ever-changing palimpsest.

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD

Long through the gloom Thy skies we scanned,—
We cried to Thee, but Thou wert dumb;
Yet Faith oft heard a whispered "Come,"
And Fancy felt a guiding hand.

Confirming our audacious guess,
Thy lightnings clove the clouds and seemed
To write amen to all we dreamed,
Thy crashing thunders answered Yes.

Altars and fanes to Thee we raised,
Built on one vague but constant hope,
That taught us through the gloom to grope,
While on the silent stars we gazed.

We searched the skies for Thee, then turned
The glass upon the atom, till
We saw the life within it thrill
To clasp the mightiest star that burned.

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD

Life yearning unto Life — the spark
 Within the seed that bursts the sod
 Claims kindred with an unknown God,
But never leaps the bridgeless dark.

Hope crying in the gloom, a child
 Amid strange lights and shadows lost,
 'Twixt doubt and fear perplexed and tossed,
By any whispered word beguiled.

Unfaltering Faith may seek to tear
 And sweep the baffling veil aside;
 We know not if the dead deride
Her efforts, but the living hear

Death laughing ever at her creed,
 Blighting each promise ere it bloom,
 Till all the past seems but a tomb,
And every hope a broken reed.

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD

A tomb! a broken reed! Ah no!
We die, but dying leave behind
That which may teach us yet to find
Where Life's immortal waters flow.

A thousand ages yet unborn,
Pregnant with promises that cast
Their beams before, may bring at last
The birth-blaze of the coming morn.

Within the growing light we fade
With all the things of yesterday
That swift-paced Progress flings away,
Or Science scoffs into the shade.

Or as the scattered fragments fly
Beneath the Builder's hand, so we
Fall from the fabric that shall be
A temple lifted to the sky.

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD

Or is it Babel that we build

Age after age upon our dead?

And is our faith a fiction fed

On dreams as vain as those that filled

The sons of Noah when they toiled

And piled the tower on Shinar's plain?

Oh! is the hope we cherish vain,

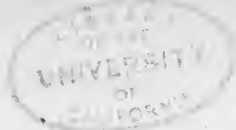
And at the last shall we be foiled?

Nay, when far future years have passed,

Our lives shall not have been for naught;

For, out of bleak oblivion brought,

We shall behold Thy face at last.



THE LORD OF HOSTS

FIGMENT of hoary myth and outworn creed,
Born of the thunder-peal and blazing rift
That lighted earth's dark dawn, to Thee we lift
Our hands and cry for succor as we bleed.
Jove and Jehovah, Allah, Mars, and Thor,
All held the cloudy throne where now we kneel
To beg Thy blessing on the flashing steel
That lights our legions through the mists of war.

Alas ! we linger still in Janus' fane,
And watch the twin-faced god glare east and
west,
While Mammon mocks the Martyr on the
Tree.

The angel seen by shepherds on the plain
Comes once again, but comes in armor dressed,
The herald of a darker deity.

HYMN TO FREEDOM

BLOOD-BOUGHT, and yet the price was freely
paid,

As many a crimsoned battle-field could tell ;
And thunder tread of war, and clash of blade,
And the glad clanging birth-song of a bell ;
Then one bright torch that blazed above the
gloom,

As Liberty leaped forth and sealed Oppression's
doom.

The grit and grandeur of the men who poured
Their blood to buy this priceless heritage,—
They whose quick hands ne'er trifled with the
sword,

Nor trembled when they signed the chartered
page,

Sleep in the soil they saved, and yet they rise
And look on us to-day with stern demanding
eyes.

HYMN TO FREEDOM

What were it worth, this birthright of the free,

If we, as careless keepers of the trust,

The byword of a world at last should be?

Ye glib-tongued sophists! shall our sabres
rust?

Beware, ye Babel-builders, lest these towers

That climb to kiss the stars, should fall when

Treason glowers!

What can we claim, when in the scales of God

We throw the patriot prestige of the past?

Our fathers' blood, long silent in the sod,

Begins to mourn; yea, though we now
should cast

Into the balance every deathless name

That lights our sacred scroll, 't would light us to

our shame,

HYMN TO FREEDOM

If we, as watchers of a nation's fate,

While all our skies above are rainbow-
spanned,

Forget the stealthy foe within our gate,

Or the broad, rugged creed our fathers
planned.

What is it worth, this liberty we boast,

While rank Corruption's growth spreads thick
from coast to coast,

While perjured politicians with a bait

Of luring lies ensnare a people's vote,

While journalistic scavengers can freight

With filth the sheets that through the
country float,

While Justice weeps to see upon her throne

A bought and bloated thing that boodlers boldly
own?

HYMN TO FREEDOM

For less than this methinks the hero clay
That stood our bulwark oft against the
foe

Would rise to save its country from decay,
Did not this deadly upas o'er it grow ;
Shame be it that its poisoned branches spread
Their blasting shade above the soil that holds
such dead !

What time a deadlier devastating blight
Than this or any country ever knew
Dared lift its ghastly features to the light,
A million blades 'round Freedom's banner
drew.

Now let Corruption check these dastard hordes,
Or soon the grass we tread will glisten into
swords.

HYMN TO FREEDOM

Then, slumber on, ye brave, and have no fear ;
We stand beside our watch-fires, and our
eyes,
Fixed on God's changeless stars, see, shining
clear,
The light that saves. Yea, we shall realize
The faith-framed fabric of your morning dream,
And clasp the captured grail that guides us with
its gleam.

For, as our fathers did, we turn to Thee,
Great God of Nations, and we rest secure ;
Our eyes behold across Time's troublous sea,
A pharos flaming high above the roar
Of baffling tempest and of changing tide,—
Triumphant type that tells of wrecking storms
defied.

THE SECRET GRASP

THESE mongrel miscreants from o'er the sea
Would any country, any cause betray,
As witness our own civil war, when they
In scores of thousands from the flag did flee.
Let everlasting shame be ours if we
Should in one balance their black perjuries
weigh
'Gainst England's friendship! Shall we thus
repay
The mighty service rendered us, when she
Stretched forth her arm and held the world aloof
While, with a secret grasp and whispered word,
She strained Neutrality's stern laws and gave
Of blood and brotherhood such sterling proof,
That Europe's marshaled millions never stirred,
Though Spain cried loud to them for help
to save?

HAVOC

WAIT till these ragged vagabonds now swarming
o'er the land
Are clothed and fed, and drilled and led, and feel
the guiding hand

Of some clear-headed leader, born upon the
battle-field,
Some new Napoleon of the West, whose iron
hand can wield

The sceptre equal with the sword, some daring
son of Mars,
Some hero of a hundred fights, who laughs at
death and scars ;

HAVOC

Wait till his marching myriads come, poor vaga-
bonds no more,
But every one a soldier trained, a dog of death
and war.

Straining until the leash is slipped, these human
hounds of hell,
Armed to the teeth, crime in their hearts, rushing
with angry yell

Down on your crowded cities there, where loot
and beauty stand
Easy to pluck, like ripened fruit, by any daring
hand.

Nay, smile not in derision, for be sure that day
will come,—
You'll see their bayonets glitter, you'll hear
their rolling drum.

HAVOC

E'en now the moaning of the storm is in the
distance heard,—

Yea, even now the tranquil sky with thunder
clouds is blurred.

They're swelling big and bigger still, and yet
you sit and smile,

Secure behind your money-bags but for a little
while.

For soon the awful storm will burst upon you
like a flood,

The gutters of your crowded streets will overflow
with blood.

What right divine do you possess? What angel
guards your door?

Listen, and down a hundred years you still can
hear the roar

HAVOC

Of frantic Frenchmen dancing 'round the crimsoned guillotine,
Drunk with the blood of gentlemen, of nobles,
king and queen.

And still, poor idiots, do you smile, secure behind
your gold,
When heads a thousand times more firm have in
the basket rolled.

Remember that the wealth you hoard, got by
your scheming skill,
Will never purchase safety then,—these demons
hunt to kill.

You've often clothed and fed them, too, but now
no trifling sop,
Though thrown in haste before his jaws, this
Cerberus can stop.

HAVOC

With murder in his hellish heart, he wants both
blood and gold ;

He only knows that you are rich, that he is
starved and cold.

“Down with the rich !” his battle-cry, “The
people shall be free !”

Freedom for them ! You gave it when you
called them o’er the sea,—

The vice, the crime, the scum, the slime of every
foreign land,

And over them your ægis threw, and grasped
each traitor hand.

Now you shall reap the harvest that by your-
selves was sown,

And tread the burning ploughshare with many a
bitter groan.

HAVOC

You fought about the negro once; now for yourselves take care,—

There's treachery around you, and there's murder lurking near.

THE OLD YEAR

THE year is dying with its hopes and fears,
Its few faint smiles, its many bitter tears ;
 Another comes when strikes the midnight
 hour,—
Will Fortune light my path, or will it lower
With Disappointment's clouds? Beyond the
 power
Or ken of aught of mortal birth to say,
The evil is sufficient to the day.
 And they, I ween, are happiest who defy
Sunshine or shadow, bright or cloudy sky,
And to the future look with calm philosophy.

JUBILATE DEO

RIGHTEOUS Ruler, Royal Lady, throned in
majesty and splendor,

Thou before whose matchless prestige all the
past and present pale,

Hear the world-encircling chorus which thy many
millions render,

Hear our mighty Jubilate,—Sovereign-Queen
and Empress, hail!

While thy white-walled island shaketh with the
message that is pouring

From thy thunder-throated warders as they tell
it to the deep,

While the heaven-storming anthem now above
the clouds is soaring,

While the bounding heart of Britain doth with
exultation leap,

JUBILATE DEO

All along the seas the echo rolleth till earth's
corners listen;

Mighty marts and commerce-crowded ports
and rivers hear it swell,

Lonely islands of the ocean, set in tropic tides
that glisten

Into gladness, speed it onward, and the tale of
triumph tell.

Where the dawn of new dominion into splendid
noon is glowing,

And the bright prophetic legend over Afric
skies is scrolled,

Where thy sons the seeds of empire with ambi-
tious hands are sowing,

There they think of thee and England, and
their song is skyward rolled.

JUBILATE DEO

Hark! while India's dusky myriads in their
many tongues proclaim thee;

Mighty Empress of the East, three hundred
millions to thee call;

There from Scinde to far Sadiya, now again we
hear them name thee,

Now again their mingling voices ring from
Gilgit down to Galle.

Where in unfamiliar beauty night's bright lamps
are hung in heaven,

While the starry crux is dying in the dawn of
austral skies,

There the cannonading chorus flashes forth from
lips of levin,

And o'er sunny seas of sapphire on from isle
to island flies.

JUBILATE DEO

Drowned to-day the mighty music of Niagara's
falling river,
Lost in pure Pacific pæans, mingling with
Atlantic's roar ;
Mountain, field, and lake are listening, into life
the forests quiver,
For they hear Vancouver calling unto lonely
Labrador.

Many a bivouac and barrack hears the reveille
rejoicing,
Many a citadel and fortress frowning over
foreign foam
Knows the music of that bugle, and with tongues
of thunder voicing
Forth a great *Io Triumphe*, rolls an answering
message home.

JUBILATE DEO

Where the sheltering flag of England over land
and sea is streaming,

Where beneath a foreign banner British hearts
beat quick with pride,

Where across the trackless waters England's
ships are swiftly steaming,

Where her barks with tempest battle, or at
anchor safely ride,

There thy liegemen now salute thee, for wherever
they may wander,

'Neath that flag is always England, but to-day
it is a shrine,

Where they kneel and on her thousand years
of matchless glory ponder,

Rising never to forget the brightest of them all
are thine.

JUBILATE DEO

Where the home and hearth are sacred, yea,
wherever women glory

In the virtue that doth vanquish, where in
every land they dwell,

For long years they've learnt to love and linger
o'er thy stainless story,

And a world of women's voices of another
empire tell.

Golden mists of sixty summers melt and we again
behold thee

Maiden-monarch, sceptred, symboled, throned
and crowned as England's Queen,

There the promise of the present with its glory
aureoled thee,

While the ancient Abbey's arches never bent
o'er grander scene.

JUBILATE DEO

Then we see thee wife and mother,—tranquil
days of joy whose fleetness
Grandeur, glory, power, and prestige could not
for one moment stay,—
Days that dawned in peace and compassed every
rare domestic sweetness,
Till a life-enshrouding shadow fell across thy
cloudless way.

From thy lips the lurking Spoiler dashed the cup
of all thy gladness,—
O ye Mountains of Gilboa! tears were then
your dews and rain ;
Then from Dan to Beersheba all the land was
filled with sadness,
For our tears with thine were mingled when
thy lofty mate was slain.

JUBILATE DEO

Ah, we miss thy minstrel Merlin, who with swift,
unfaltering fingers,
Taught the sounding Harp of England
Honor's hymn and Sorrow's tale ;
Over many a song immortal, sung to thee, how
Memory lingers,
Till we almost hear his voice and see the
guiding gleam and grail.

Nay, the gleam is ever with us ; thou for sixty
years hast worn it,—
'T is the guiding light of England, Glory's star
and Honor's ray ;
On thy forehead now it resteth, Truth and
Righteousness adorn it,
And it still shall lead us onward as it lights
our path to-day.

JUBILATE DEO

Now though Court and Camp and Cloister, Art
and Song around thee cluster,
Till the glory that enfolds thee seemeth more
of heaven than earth,
Yet it cannot for one moment blind us to the
brighter lustre
Of the faith that never faltered, of the woman's
splendid worth.

Though with triumph and with pageant and with
pæan we extol thee,
As we lift thee and enthrone thee on the height
of England's fame,
Yet thy three-times-twenty years of blameless
womanhood enroll thee
With a halo that outshineth all thy gemmed
tiara's flame.

JUBILATE DEO

Now unto the King of Kings, the Lord of Hosts,
the God of Nations,

On whose Truth, for strength and wisdom,
thou with fearless faith dost lean,

While the prayer and psalm are mingling with an
empire's acclamations,

Unto Him we do commend thee, Sovereign
Lady, Empress, Queen.

TENNYSON

HIS was the hand to strike our English lyre,
And his the voice to answer to its tone ;
From the low cottage to the lofty throne,
In roaring London, or in sleeping shire,
We knew the beacon gleam of Merlin's fire.
Long as our language lives the world shall hear
His clarion notes still ringing loud and clear,
The purest voice in our celestial choir.

He sang of love, and lo ! our brimming eyes
Flowed over as we thought of fair Elaine ;
He sang of death in stately harmonies,
And half relieved it of its grief and pain :
Whene'er the trembling chords his fingers swept,
The world stood silent, or with gladness wept.

BYRON

THOU Master Minstrel! through whose wondrous strain,

Rebellious notes of fierce defiance ring;

For thy deformity did to thee bring

A bitterness that frenzied heart and brain,

And galled thy restless spirit like a chain.

Thy tongue was sharper than an adder's sting,

And quick and far its venom it could fling,

Or blight, or blast, or wither with disdain.

But in thy matchless measures thou didst paint

Love's loveliest scenes, and such a glamour
throw

O'er sin's soft errors, that we almost kneel

To each frail beauty as to some fair saint;

The flowery path seems not to lead to woe,

Thy rich red roses all its thorns conceal.

ON A PORTRAIT OF LUCIUS HAR- WOOD FOOTE

WHEN Art's apt fingers almost show the mind,
And Genius doth unto the canvas lend
The look of life, the colors thus combined
In an immortal masterpiece do blend ;
Though skilfully and well hereon are laid
The conjuring pigments, yet when Time shall
 stain
And dust bedim, a voice from out the shade
Will echo on in an undying strain.

We know, white-souled and loyal-hearted man,
That unto all who shall this picture scan,
 Though it may be far on in distant days,
Thy face will be familiar, for the fame
Which now thy modest heart bids thee disclaim
 Will crown thy brow with Art's eternal bays.

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE THE
OLD BALLADE

(DOUBLE BALLADE)

OF all the tangled tropes that tell
Of love or hate, or joy or pain,
In sonnet, rondeau, villanelle,
Or ode, or epic, or quatrain,
Or any other kind of strain,
Or light or heavy, gay or sad,
To bring a boon or balk a bane,
There's nothing like the old ballade.

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE THE OLD BALLADE

Its single cymbal suits me well,
But when I sound the clanging twain,
Then Pegasus begins to smell
The battle, and he shakes his mane;
No need of spur,— I give him rein.
Think ye that he's a patient pad?
To make him gallop for his grain,
There's nothing like the old ballade.

Did not rash Villon in his cell
Hard by the sobbing waves of Seine,
Deaf to the dooming, dismal bell,
And all unmindful of his chain,
There carol forth a rare refrain
That comes to us with glory clad?
If rhyme could rid him of his stain,
There's nothing like the old ballade.

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE THE OLD BALLADE

For from his reckless lips there fell
Such glowing gems that Glory's fane,
Wherein the world's Immortals dwell,
Doth many a less than he contain.
The prude may treat him with disdain,
She neither can detract nor add,
For beauty did a champion gain,—
There's nothing like the old ballade.

The high-born maiden's heart will swell,
And think the whispered vow inane
Sweet as the voice of philomel,
When poesy hath made it plain.
See yonder awkward, stammering swain !
His simple song makes Chloe glad ;
When tongues are tied and vows are vain,
There's nothing like the old ballade.

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE THE OLD BALLADE

The tune that Triton taught the shell,
Sung by the surge and hurricane,
The lute of Orpheus, 'neath whose spell
We, like the Thracians, long have lain,
Pan's pipes that filled the shepherd's brain
With melody that made him mad,
All live,—so why should Villon wane?
There's nothing like the old ballade.

ENVOY

Prince! though this tantalizing skein
Of rhyme hath less of good than bad,
A cup to Villon let us drain,—
There's nothing like the old ballade.

ON NEW YEAR'S EVE

(RONDEAU)

ON New Year's Eve, long years ago,
Ere Temple Bar was leveled low,
 I strolled along the Strand and Fleet,—
 I mean, of course, the classic street,—
Then Ludgate Hill I mounted slow.

I paused in Paternoster Row,
At Amen Corner there,—for oh !
 I heard Paul's bells a pæan beat,
 On New Year's Eve.

Their music drowned the Bells of Bow,
In Cheapside near, for such a flow
 Of rhythmic ringing, full and sweet,
 Did greet me then, it still doth greet
Me through the years where'er I go
 On New Year's Eve.

VIVE LA BAGATELLE

(BALLADE)

OFTEN when I think
Of the days gone by,
Into gloom I sink,
And I sit and sigh,
Scarcely knowing why ;
Monk in lonely cell
Happier is than I,—
Vive la bagatelle !

Let the glasses clink !
Drain the beakers dry !
Death to sorrow drink !
Life to jollity !
See the shadows fly !
Better cap and bell,
Than in grief to die,—
Vive la bagatelle !

VIVE LA BAGATELLE

Ah, those cheeks of pink !

Little rogue so sly,
Forging link by link,
Every one a tie ;
Lips that I might try
Vainly to repel,
Conquer as they cry,
Vive la bagatelle !

ENVOY

Happy hearts that lie
Safe within love's spell ;
Sorrow may defy,—
Vive la bagatelle !

BIRTHDAY SONNET

WE cry when we are born, but when we die,
Though others there may be who for us weep,
Yet do we often welcome that last sleep,
And pass away from earth without a sigh.
But in the intervening years that fly
Sorrow and joy uncertain vigils keep,
Till life itself seems naught but vanity,
And death the only harvest we shall reap.

As to Egyptian feasts the corpse was brought,
To teach the revelers that life was naught,
So may this dismal verse to thee appear ;
But not one shadow would I cast this day,—
I wish thee all good things, and with them pray
That God will give thee many a happy year.

THE DEVOTEE

THOU art no saint, but when I feel
Thy blessed lips on mine,
In adoration I could kneel
And own thee half divine.
A glory crowns thy golden hair,
And lights thy loving eyes ;
Daughter of earth, thou art as fair
As those who tread the skies.

And when in my enraptured ears
Thy murmuring accents flow,
I think some spirit of the spheres
Hath wandered here below ;
For angel lips alone could move
In melody so sweet.
Child of the skies, behold thy love
A suppliant at thy feet.

THE DEVOTEE

Time's rough unsparing hand will chase
Thy loveliness away ;
But there 's a nobler, loftier grace
That triumphs o'er decay.
The heart that never once betrayed,
That changing years have tried,
When all thy other beauties fade,
Shall draw me to thy side.



FRANCESCA

LADY, thy melodist, on Fancy's wing,
Far through the golden-misted past doth stray;
Oh, if to crown thy beauty he could bring
The silver beam of Dante's deathless ray,
That 'round the brow of Beatrice doth play,
Or that which Petrarch did o'er Laura fling,—
Thy name, dear love, should down the ages ring,
Till earth and all thereon were swept away.

Fame's living leaves should be thine aureole,
And such a song as shrines old Ilium's curse
Should tell the years the beauty that is thine ;
A hymn of homage down Time's tide to roll,
To bear thee onward in a deathless verse,—
That were thy guerdon, if the gift were mine.

THROUGH JOYOUS YEARS

THROUGH joyous years, that ever show
Increase of gladness as they go,

 May calm content and happiness,
 And all life holds to crown and bless,
Be what the gods on thee bestow.

May summer skies above thee glow,
And favoring breezes ever blow,
 Thy bark o'er tranquil tides to press
 Through joyous years.

And tears,—if tears should sometimes flow,—
May they be April showers that owe
 Their source to joy and not distress ;
 That vanish with the close caress
Of lips that love and fonder grow
 Through joyous years.

ADIEU D'AMOUR

FAITHFUL in every fibre of thy heart,
And all as beautiful as thou art true,
Yet if it be thy wish that we should part,
Let's unkiss all our vows and say Adieu.

The love that glowed so warmly in thy breast
Is dying slowly,—shall we let it die?
Yes, if the flickering flame brings thee unrest,
My tears shall drown it as I weep Good-by.

Good-by! Ah no! We cannot break the chain;
The fetters fused in passion's crucible
Are hard to sever; so we must remain
Bound to each other, though we sigh Farewell.

ENGLAMOURED

THERE 's a love that every other love excelleth,
And its glamour doth outglow the noonday sun;
'T is the faith that with suspicion never dwelleth,
And the rapture that is reckless to outrun
The fond hope that every compassed joy sur-
passes,
Till with eagerness it thrilleth to embrace.
They may bid me look on thee through Doubt's
dark glasses,
But I only see the beauty of thy face.

I LOVE THEE STILL

(RONDEAU)

I LOVE thee still,—there's not a day
That drags its dreary length away,
From dark December unto June,
Through winter night or summer noon,
But unto thee my fancies stray.

Poor heralds of my heart are they
Who would to thee my love convey
And woo thee with the wearying tune,—
I love thee still.

Ah, but to feel thy pulses play,
And once again my head to lay
On thy white breast! For such a boon,
Though thou wert fickle as the moon,
My lips would cling to thee and say,—
I love thee still.

THE SUPPLICANT

IDEAL beauty such as angels wear
Clothes thee with living glory, and I feel
An overpowering influence to kneel
And vows of love, eternal love, to swear ;
Oh listen, and these supplications hear !
These sighs and tears which I cannot conceal
Would move a heart of adamant steel,
Or from a silent sphinx its secret tear.

Mysterious power of Love ! lend me thine aid,—
They never call in vain who cry to thee.
By that wild kiss which on her lips I laid,
Tumultuous type of richer rhapsody,
For one short hour these fevered lips of mine
Steep in voluptuous love's enchanted wine.

THEA

WHEN 'gainst the clamor of my blood the wave
Of chiding crimson rushes to thy face ;
When with insistent beat my pulses race
And mock the rebel blushes that would brave
And balk me of the bliss for which I crave,—
Then, though thy lips may mutine for a space,
Soon in the cincture of a close embrace
Breathes the surrendering sigh that oft forgave.

I dream of thee by day and night ; the flame
Thy kiss hath kindled in my blood doth glow
Like to a ceaseless and a secret fire
To light me to the hour when I shall claim
The pledge of passion promised long ago,—
The crowning of my love and life's desire.

WAIFS

ONE morn with quickened pulses did we stand
Where life's young fountains murmured of
unrest ;

The virgin vintage of her lips I pressed,
And lo ! we passed to an enchanted land,
Where Ruin's bridgeless gulf was rainbow-
spanned ;

But when that night she wept upon my breast,
She seemed a love-wrecked angel on the strand
Of some strange star, wing-weary and unblest.

Not all unhappy, still we drift along,
Down the wild waters of Love's waif-strown sea;
And closer do we cling, when others tell
Of that dark whirlpool in whose eddies strong
Frail passion-freighted lovers such as we
Are dragged by under-currents down to hell.

RUBRIC

Not as the Pharisee who stood apart
And thanked Thee that he was not like the
rest ;

But as the Publican who smote his breast
And owned the sin that ruled his rebel heart ;
So when we err forgive us, for Thou art
Most merciful to those who in love's quest
Grow obdurate, till Conscience hath no dart
That is not dulled and ceases to molest.

When the warm warrant of the blood begins
To lend its license to our love, and we
Revel in all the rapturous joys that make
Us derelict to duty, may our sins
Be lighter held if then we pray to Thee
That other hearts through us may never
ache.

IN ABSENCE

I sit with Pan beneath Arcadian trees
And see the satyr and the nymph and faun ;
I look on dazzling Aphrodite drawn
By dolphins over shining sapphire seas ;
I hear the tune of Triton in the breeze,
Sad philomel at night, the lark at dawn,
But little power have they to appease
My passion and my pain when thou art gone.

Yea, e'en the paths of poesy seem bare
Of all their beauty, for I fail to find
In them the flowers whose fragrance once
could fling
A spell around me that defied despair,
That made me deaf to love, to passion blind,—
But little consolation now they bring.

LOVE ME ONCE MORE

Love me once more. Ah, what have I to do
With love, or what has love to do with me?
And yet thy face by day and night I see,
And with this prayer my soul doth thine pursue,—
Love me once more.

Love me once more ; and it will teach the pen
That pleads so feebly to thee on this page
To tell lorn lovers, in some after age,
That love, though dead, may leap to life again.

Love me once more ; for as the hart doth pant
To drink the water-brooks, I thirst for thee ;
Here, in the waste of life, I bend the knee
And murmur like a famished mendicant,—
Love me once more.

LOVE ME ONCE MORE

Love me once more ; and these poor rhymes I
write

In thrilling trumpet tones shall sound thy
name,

Till it shall echo where the Peaks of Fame
Are bathed forever in ambrosial light.

Love me once more. Dost thou no longer heed
That which had once been life's supremest
prize?

And wilt thou now the proffered gift despise
And turn away, to mock me, as I plead,—

Love me once more?

THE IDOLATER

METHINKS it is not strange that I should kneel,
For 'round thy head a golden glory plays;
Nor do I wonder that my senses reel,
Delirious with the glamour of thy gaze;
And when thy rich, impassioned lips I press,
Life's cup is full, and death would be most
sweet
If I could breathe farewell in that caress
And make thy snowy limbs my winding-sheet.

Ah no, dear love, unless that parting sigh
Mingles with thine, and in one joyous flight
We voyage onward o'er the trackless sky,
Till havened in some heaven of delight,
I'd rather linger with thee on this sphere,
For heaven is close when thou, my love, art near.

WHEN LULU COMES

(RONDEAU)

WHEN Lulu comes,—yea, long before
Her dainty fingers beat my door,
 Before her eager step I hear,
 My heart leaps up to greet my dear,—
It must be Love's unconscious lore.

I live upon the topmost floor;
Yet never lark did skyward soar
 With gladder heart than hers, I swear,
 When Lulu comes.

Like waves that beat a distant shore,
The crowded streets beneath me roar.
 What care I for that sullen sphere,
 When heaven itself is drawing near?
Its glowing gates I'll pass once more,
 When Lulu comes.

VICTOR LOVE

TENDER, melting lips, distilling
Love's rich vintage, sweet and rare ;
Trusting, pleading eyes, now filling
With the bright reproachful tear,
A sob so sweet, so softly low,
A breath of heaven, a knell of woe.

Ah, the murmuring and the sighing,
And the tumult in each breast !
Heart to heart is now replying,
Victor Love is crowned and blest ;
The tyrant sits in Reason's throne,
And claims the kingdom for his own.

VICTOR LOVE

How he scatters all his treasures

On his subjects, you and me,—

Golden showers of richest pleasures !

Godlike mortals now are we.

What care we for the sword of flame

That bars the gate through which we came !

What, beloved, art thou sobbing,

Weeping that there 's no return ?

How thy timid heart is throbbing !

How thy cheeks with crimson burn !

My kiss shall teach thee to forget,

And love shall triumph o'er regret.

GOOD-BY, SWEETHEART

(RONDEAU)

GOOD-BY, sweetheart,—you made me blest,
But now you leave me like the rest.

The future seems a black abyss,
But o'er the gulf I waft a kiss,
Which on this parting page is pressed.

By others I have been caressed,
But you I loved the last and best,
Yet now, like them, you murmur this,—
 Good-by, sweetheart.

Your coldness long ago was guessed,
Although it never was confessed ;
But I forgive you for the bliss
Of bygone days, which I shall miss
In those to come,—but why protest?
 Good-by, sweetheart.

THE TEMPTRESS

BELIKE thou art a temptress come from hell,—
The devil oft dons a fair disguise,—
And yet I like the laughter in thine eyes,
And for thy lips, I love them wondrous well;
They do remind me of an ocean shell,
With all its murmuring melody of sighs,
Till I forget, when captive to their spell,
The whispered music may be naught but lies.

Nay, nay! I do thee wrong; have I not felt
The rosy rebels into sweetness melt,
And seen thee swoon beneath my warm caress?
What matter if thy lips the word withhold,—
In the mute music of thy pulses bold
Thy love grows voluble and doth confess.

THE KING IS DEAD; LONG LIVE
THE KING!

(BALLADE)

WHEN Villon sang the melted snows,

The white shroud of a buried year,

Say, did the traitor winds disclose

Their hiding-place, or tell him where

Were laid the dead, the debonair

Lost women whom he loved to sing?

No, but they sighed, then answered clear,—

The king is dead; long live the king!

Why weep the love-surrendered rose?

Is faded beauty worth a tear?

On yonder stem another glows,

In fresher fragrance hanging there;

THE KING IS DEAD; LONG LIVE THE KING

While in the murmuring breeze we hear
The love-song of the joyous Spring,
Shouting above old Winter's bier,
The king is dead; long live the king!

And thus the cycling measure goes;
One day fond lips allegiance swear,
The next the wanton traitress throws
Her eyes on some new cavalier,
Who for a season short may wear
Her favors, in his turn to fling
Them to the winds for one more fair,—
The king is dead; long live the king!

ENVOY

Prince! when you listen to the cheer
That through your crowded courts shall ring,
Remember, thus they 'll hail your heir—
The king is dead; long live the king!

VACILLATION

THE blessing and the curse alternate rise ;
One day I swear that thou art fairer far
Than the chaste beauty of yon silver star
That nightly hangs her lamp in western skies ;
The next I look on thee with other eyes,—
Thy beauty hath all vanished, and thou art
Foul as a leper, and thy traitor heart
Seems but a sink of craftiness and lies.

One day with many a passion-prompted vow
I braid love's votive blossoms in thy hair ;
The next I tear the tribute from thy brow,
And crown thee with the curses of despair :
Swayed by the changing moon, tides ebb and flow,
So to thy fickle heart these moods I owe.

THE FRIAR'S CONFESSION

(BALLADE)

OF this fasting and praying I 'm weary,
For the flesh is rebellious and bold ;
I have mumbled and said Ave Mary,
Of my Paters a thousand I 've told,
And in sackcloth I 'm cassocked and stoled ;
I am buttressed with candle and bell,
Still a face of the lost I behold,
For of such is the kingdom of hell.

At the first she seemed timid and chary,
And she blushed 'neath her nimbus of gold ;
Then she smiled at each sinful vagary
That her whispering lips did unfold,
Till I thought of that temptress of old
Whom Saint Anthony drove from his cell ;
But I shrived her and soothed and consoled,
For of such is the kingdom of hell.

THE FRIAR'S CONFESSION

But she left me one day, and I query,
To whose arms has the wanderer strolled?
Let Te Deum, and not Miserere,
A loud song of thanksgiving be trolled.
But perhaps she is under the mould,
And her soul with the devil doth dwell;
Let Beelzebub then be condoled,
For of such is the kingdom of hell.

ENVOY

When the face of a wanton's enrolled
With a halo, it's hard to repel;
Then no wonder we're often cajoled,
For of such is the kingdom of hell.

THE MAENAD

THAT fiction in thy face is not a blush,—

Do I not know thy glowing beauty well?

'T is Passion's rosy herald, as I crush

The ripe grapes of thy lips, and doth foretell

A richer vintage than did ever crown

Bacchante's reddest beaker; though that flood

Hath often lit with laughter Sorrow's frown,

It never lent such longings to my blood.

Thy kisses shake my pulses, till my heart,

Lured by the murmuring music in thy veins,

Panteth with Passion's painless pangs for
thee.

Who taught thy lips to link with such sweet art

These soul-ensnaring and flesh-fettering chains,

Thy tongue this soft Circean sorcery?

THE WEDDING-BELL

THIS day, long years ago, my love and life
And loyalty were pledged, and as thy bride,
Thy best beloved, thy chosen one and wife,
I heard these words, when standing at thy
side :—

“ Whom God hath joined, let naught on
earth divide.”

With clean young lips I gave thee vow for vow,
From thee no secret did my heart then hide,
With faith and love thy words did me endow,—
Down through the wasted years thy voice comes
ringing now.

My heart was pure as is the crystal dew
That trembles in the lily's breast of snow;
But only for a few short months 't was true ;

THE WEDDING-BELL

How few, 't were better for thee not to know.

Before distrust was dreamt of, years ago,

I gave myself to one whose lips of fire

Made my young placid pulses throb and
glow

And leap beneath the lashes of desire,

Till Innocence lay dead on Passion's flaming pyre.

They say the first false step is hard to take !

To some, perhaps, it is, but unto me

It was most easy ; for I did forsake

Virtue's stern path as one who turns to flee

From some unpleasant thing ; I sought the
free,

Voluptuous scenes where Passion spreads her
flowers,

Nor did I have one weak regret for thee ;

Eager I was for Sin's soft sensual hours,

And from thy side would steal to those forbidden
bowers.

THE WEDDING-BELL

How many times I've felt thy lips on mine,
 Joined in a kiss of trusting tenderness !
While I would cling unto thee like a vine,
 And lasting love and loyalty confess,
 Little thy poor deluded heart did guess
In other arms that very hour I'd lain :
 Thus with my Judas lips and soft caress
Did I thy love and confidence retain,
While closer round thy heart I forged the galling
 chain.

I loved the guilty glamour at the first,—
 It painted hell in most alluring dyes ;
For Sin's adulterous cup my soul did thirst,—
 With it I swallowed all the flattering lies
 That sang the praises of my lips and eyes,
And, like a moth, I flew to meet the flame.
 But soon I found their hollow gallantries

THE WEDDING-BELL

Did always cloak and cover but one aim,—
In every brimming glass they made me drink my
shame.

When first my stealthy steps began to tread
Sin's crooked labyrinth, I did conceal
Each guilty act with care ; for I did dread
Thy watchful eye, and then, perhaps, did feel
A little shame ; but now, with heart of steel
And face of brass and bolder feet, I go
The slippery way ; or, like a drunkard, reel
Reckless and fearless of the fate I know
That drags me down and down to one dark doom
of woe.

The beauty that thy lips once loved to praise
Withers so fast that I can see it fade ;
And Lust's bold burning breath will soon erase
The little that is left me to degrade.

THE WEDDING-BELL

I found it hard at first in shame to trade,—
I gave them my young soul, which they did
mould

Howe'er they wished, the while thy name
was made

A byword and a sneer ; now, bold and cold,
My meretricious lips have learnt to ask for gold.

And now, I am—ah God ! I hate to speak
The loathsome word—a thing that knows
not where

Its proper place is. Sometimes when I seek
To gather from the past some hope to cheer,
I think of what I am, and freeze with fear ;
But in my dreams I wander back again

To brighter scenes, and I behold thee, dear,
As in our love's young days. Alas, how vain !
Before the breaking dawn the dreamy vistas wane.

THE WEDDING-BELL

At first a few were good to me and kind,
But all their kindness was of no avail;
Bound up in self, I was both deaf and blind,
The promises I made were meant to fail.
'T is easy to be false when one is frail,
And I became an adept to deceive,
Till now there is no sin at which I quail,
Nor anything in life o'er which I grieve,
Except, perhaps, our child, to whom I hope to
cleave.

And so they all did go, till every one
Had passed away from me, and quickly, too.
I saw old friends, with faces turned to shun,
Avoid me on the street; for well they knew
That I had joined the black, abandoned
crew,

And like a chattel could be bought and sold.
Did I say all? No; one poor fool was
true,—

THE WEDDING-BELL

One who had loved me well in days of old,—
But the devoted dupe could give me little gold.

And now I do not find it very hard

To stalk my quarry on the public street ;
Practice hath skilled me well my looks to
guard,

And often when some stranger comes to
greet

My actions are most proper and discreet.
My long-experienced eyes have learnt to look
With well-schooled glances, most demure
and sweet ;

I know the crafty lesson like a book,
And with what charms are left I bait the hidden
hook.

Why enter into all the ways and wiles

That women like me use to gain their ends ?

THE WEDDING-BELL

The contemplation hardly reconciles

The present with the past ; it only blends

Sorrow and sin together, and it lends

A bitterness that rankles in the heart.

Though I am hardened now beyond amends,

And all untouched by Shame's most poignant
dart,

Yet when I think on thee my soul with pain doth
smart.

I loved thee once ; I think I love thee still,

Though time hath taught my hardened heart
to shrink

From brooding o'er those days ; but Memory
will

Call up the tears. When now, too late, I
think

That I gave thee life's bitterest cup to
drink,

THE WEDDING-BELL

How fast they rise, though no one sees them
flow!

And when I kiss thy child, the one last link
That binds me to the past, too well I know
That to myself alone my misery I owe.

The breath of Spring once more is in the air
As on that day; the skies are clear and
bright;

I feel the breezes running through my hair,
And, for a moment, gaze with aching sight
Across the years to scenes that half invite
My wandering feet to struggle and return.

Alas! the vision passes as I write;

'T were vain to let my heart one moment yearn
In tenderness for thee,—the suppliant thou
wouldst spurn.

THE WEDDING-BELL

I once did think that from my murdered past
No spectres e'er could rise to bring me pain ;
But now they throng around me thick and fast,
Beating with unseen wings my throbbing
brain.

Once more I stand by thee, and once again
With perjured lips my marriage vows I tell,—
God! What is this? Have I become
insane?

No! no! And yet I hear my wedding-bell
Striking across the years,—Hope's fateful, final
knell.

A WHITED SEPULCHRE

A FACE most fair and aureoled above
With such a golden glory, it doth seem
A garland woven in a poet's dream
To bind the brows of Innocence and Love ;
Eyes with the trusting fondness of the dove,
And lips, so sweetly parted, they appear
To breathe the heart's pure orisons sincere,
Or with Truth's tender vows alone to move.

Ah, whited charnel ! where the roses bloom,
Only to hide the horrors of the tomb,
Thy ghastly foulness thou canst not disguise.
Those facile lips are skilled in every art,
The ready servants of a venal heart,
While serpents lurk within the dove-like eyes.

HEAVEN AND HELL

If within those pearly portals where the just
made perfect sing

Endless songs and hallelujahs in the presence
of the King ;

Where the Church Triumphant triumphs over
all the things of earth,

Where they know the full fruition of their mystic
second birth ;

Born of water and the Spirit, into glory, into
light,

Sunshine ever, darkness never, clothed in robes
of spotless white ;

HEAVEN AND HELL

Where through all the courts of heaven ring
 hosannas to the Lamb,
Where they glorify the Father, He, the One, the
 Great I AM,

If, ye beatific spirits ever circling 'round the
 throne,
Ye are happy, still remain so, Earth hath pleasures
 of her own.

Flesh and blood cannot inherit those eternal halls
 of light,
Though at times the baffled spirit tries to reach
 them in its flight.

Far above the clouds it rises on some heaven-
 storming strain,
But the weight of clay it carries drags it down to
 earth again ;



HEAVEN AND HELL

Or, perhaps, when hearts are beating and when
tender lips are pressed

To our own in love's rare moments, then, caress-
ing and caressed,

Little care we for the raptures that the sons
of God may know,—

Earth hath daughters still as fair as when they
knew them long ago.

Where the gnawing worm ne'er dieth, and the cry
of torture rolls,

Where the smoke through hell's hot hatches
riseth up from burning souls,

Where old Dives, in his torment, heavenward
rolls his pleading eyes,

Clutching with his shriveled fingers at the dear
and distant skies,

HEAVEN AND HELL

Sees the cool and crystal river where the lazy
Lazarus laves

His polluted limbs, and mocks him in his anguish
as he raves,

Begging for one drop of water, but one drop, to
cool his tongue,

Though from off the leper's finger even that one
drop were flung ;

Where forever dwell the millions who preferred
the primrose way,

Where they reap hell's hottest whirlwind and the
price of evil pay ;

If, my brothers in the brimstone, recollections
with ye dwell

Of your earthly days, remember earth itself can
turn to hell.

HEAVEN AND HELL

Go and ask that ghastly sleeper stretched upon
the public slab,

When he sought the quick quietus, whether swift
self-given stab,

Boring bullet, gas, or poison, hell itself, he did not
crave,

As his haunted, hunted spirit glared across the
Stygian wave.

Go and conjure back the breath to its abandoned
home of clay,

Then bend over his pale lips and listen well to
what they say :—

“ Bankrupt purse and tortured body, broken
heart and burning brain,

Fed upon me at the last as vultures feed upon
the slain ;

HEAVEN AND HELL

“ And with hungry beak and talon did they at
this carcase tear,
But they fled their breathing banquet when the
pistol-shot rang clear.

“ Youth and health, and wealth and station, all
the world could give, was mine,—
Though the dregs were black and bitter, yet the
draught was half divine.

“ Once I thought the light of heaven shone within
a woman's eyes,
But Delilah ne'er more deftly did her treachery
disguise.

“ All unconscious of disaster did I clasp unto
my heart
One whose Judas lips did ever with betraying
kisses part,—

HEAVEN AND HELL

“ One whose harlot-hearted homage covered all
her crafty ways,
Till hell’s torturing torch was kindled and on
earth began to blaze.

“ In its lurid light I saw her, and, by righteous
vengeance swayed,
First I thought to slay the slayer of the life she
had betrayed ;

“ But a coward kindness showing, let *her* as the
wronged appear,
Till her perjured plea, ‘desertion,’ caught a
judge’s willing ear ;

“ Then the court-created strumpet, licensed with
her false decree,
Took my child, and took my name, and left me
blasted, wrecked, and free.

HEAVEN AND HELL

“Those that had to me been silent then the
galling story told,
How, when honored and beloved and trusted in
the days of old,

“Had her stealthy footsteps wandered from me
at the very first,
How her red, adulterous lips had always known
the guilty thirst.

“Maddened with the revelation, quick a bullet
crashed its way
Through my frenzied brain, and left me as you
find me here to-day.”

Go and give him comfort, Dives; thou art not
alone accurst;
Thou but cravest drops of water,—he, methinks,
a hotter thirst;

HEAVEN AND HELL

Ask him, as the flaming torments 'round about
ye leap and blaze,
Whether hell's most cruel tortures equal his last
earthly days.

A SKETCH

VIRTUE and truth were thine long, long ago,
But from the first thy girlish steps did walk ;
The last, they say, who saw thee upward grow,
Fled when thy lisping lips began to talk.
And thou wert wondrous fair, as many know,
But now, though plastered paint and powdered
chalk
Strive hard to hide the footprints of the crow,
Time is one suitor whom thou canst not mock.

Yea, thou didst triumph once, and rigid dames
With plainer features, but with cleaner names,
Hated the baleful beauty of thy face.
Now in the limbo of a hell whose blaze
Leaps to enfold thee, thou wouldst mend thy
ways
And try thy zigzag footsteps to retrace.

A CAROL OF THE CURSED

To THAT sad second circle, where the gale
Whirls like dead leaves the souls of those who wail
O'er bygone earthly bliss ; where, thick as dust,
The blast is peopled with the hosts of Lust,
One night I wandered, in a dream, and there
Looked on the loved and lost ones of Despair.
I saw the Mantuan with the Tuscan stand,
And with them for a space the scene I scanned.
Beauty and Anguish freighted full the blast
As Earth's immortal lemans drifted past.
All who e'er loved to hear the serpent's hiss,
From that great carnal queen, Semiramis,
Down to the comely and complying maid
Who to her lover's arms steals through the
 shade,—
All who have fed their flesh to Passion's fire
Here moan forever in a mournful choir.

A CAROL OF THE CURSED

First, Helen, whose white flesh bore many a
mark
Branded by burning lips, swept through the
dark;
Then, following, came Egypta's black-browed
queen,
Within whose glowing orbs a light was seen
That scorched a soul still hungry with desire;
Then Dido passed, who died upon the pyre;
Francesca wept and told her tale again,
Then sought Paolo in the ghostly train;
Delilah, Messalina, Jezebel,
With myriads made the circling course of hell.
The cloudy cortege as it passed displayed
Full many a fair and well-remembered shade;
When lo! I saw amid the tearful throng
One that did unto youth's fair days belong,
One I had deemed unspotted of the world,
Along the winds of hell came swiftly hurled.

A CAROL OF THE CURSED

She paused, divining well what I would ask,
And said : " I know thy wish ; shall I unmask
The secret of my life and tell thee how
I came to be what thou beholdest now ?
Shall Memory, mocking Misery, uplift
The curtain of the past ? Shall Sorrow shift
The far-off sunny scenes of girlhood till
I show where first I trembled to the thrill
Of Passion's conquering kiss ? Shall these pale
lips,

Now parched and withered in this bitter gust,
Boast of a beauty that ne'er knew eclipse,
Until, at last, it shuddered into dust ? "

" Yea, tell me all," I cried. She said : " Though
years
Have passed since I beheld thee, though thine
ears
Heard nothing of me, in another name,

A CAROL OF THE CURSED

In distant lands, my face the creed became
Of men who kneel to beauty. Soon I rose
High in a world where rank a glamour throws
Full oft around the Paphian, and I found
Myself a queen, unrivaled, myrtle-crowned.
I scaled the glittering heights of sin, where shame
Was soon forgotten in the flush of fame ;
Yet often unto thee my thoughts would turn,
For 't was thy kiss first made my blood to burn
In crimson mutiny, and in my breast
Waked the persistent demon of unrest.
Like flame on flax, thy lips on mine did lay
The red coals of desire. One Christmas day,
Within home's hallowed circle, long ago,
Lust leaped and claimed me 'neath the mistletoe,
And turned my blood to a tumultuous tide
That bore me on and on until I died.
Though in my sequent sin thou hadst no part,
Yet thy bold lips awakened in my heart

A CAROL OF THE CURSED

A hope of happiness that never bloomed,
But brought me here among the deathless
doomed."

She sighed, "Farewell!" then, borne upon the
wind,

Swept through the doleful deeps of hell to find
Some lover she had known on earth, with whom
To voyage for a season through the gloom.

THE VAMPIRE

ANGEL or demon, tell me which thou art,
And whither thou wouldst bear my captive
soul,—

If far beyond the stars that o'er us roll,
To some bright sphere where we shall never part,
Or to those regions of eternal flame,
Where spirits lost forever loudly wail.
So thou art there, dear love, 't will be the same ;
Or heaven or hell with thee I'll gladly hail.

Body and soul now thine, and thine alone,
And the rash homage of each pulsing vein,
As frenzied love leaps into Reason's throne,
And like a drunken prodigal doth reign,—
All, all confess the raptures that I feel,
As through thy lips my swooning senses steal.

IT'S NOT THE DISTANCE, IT'S THE
PACE, THAT KILLS

(DOUBLE BALLADE)

WHENAS, in summer, Sophonisba goes,
In fine foulard, adown the promenade,—
Or when, in furs, she faces winter snows,
In sumptuous sables gorgeously arrayed,—
I wonder how the rosy rustic maid
That milked the cows with simple Jacks and Jills
Into the Babylonian labyrinth strayed,—
It's not the distance, it's the pace, that kills.

For her the lowing herd no longer lows,
No more she drives it homeward through the
shade ;
The husky hoeman pauses as he hoes
To wonder why she wandered from the glade.

IT'S THE PACE THAT KILLS

Not overmuch she loved him and his spade,
So turned her from the glebe the yokel tills
And sought the city and an easy trade,—
It's not the distance, it's the pace, that kills.

Fair is she as the fabled queen that rose
From out the rippling waves that 'round her
played,
Or she who made the Greek and Trojan foes,
And watched them battle from the barricade
Through which the wooden war-horse was
conveyed
That brought about old Ilium's endless ills.
'T were better she and Helen home had
stayed,—
It's not the distance, it's the pace, that kills.

As yet her sky is overarched with bows,
Naught in the balance of her brain is weighed ;

IT'S THE PACE THAT KILLS

Little cares she for Fate's hard-handed blows,
And nothing for the hair-suspended blade.
The distant whirling blast—in which is swayed
The reaping-hook of Fate—no warning shrills ;
Such far forebodings rarely are obeyed,—
It's not the distance, it's the pace, that kills.

Mayhap the radiant loveliness that glows
Upon her cheek will not too quickly fade ;
I've sometimes seen it linger long with those
Who foot it fleetest down the fatal grade.
I mean not now your ancient withered jade,
Whose fissured features art inaptly fills ;
She trots for years the tempting turf, afraid,—
It's not the distance, it's the pace, that kills.

Where to the passing zephyr Pleasure sows
The seeds that Sorrow reaps without her aid ;
Where many a fizzing flagon upward throws

IT'S THE PACE THAT KILLS

The sparkling bubbles till the roof is sprayed ;
Where Folly runs her maddest escapade,
And most unholy passion throbs and thrills,
There laughs and loves the rustic renegade,—
It's not the distance, it's the pace, that kills.

ENVOY

Some morning in the morgue we'll see her laid,
Silent within the cold caress that stills,
That comes the rosiest revel to upbraid,—
It's not the distance, it's the pace, that kills.

MEDUSA

BOUND fast in tangled threads of golden hair,
Drunk with the fiery vintage of her kiss,
I drained a draught of death and thought it
bliss,

And all unheeding slept for many a year,
A willing captive in a silken snare.

And has that heaven turned to hell like this?
For now I hear the coiling serpents hiss,
And in her eyes behold a threat'ning glare.

I shudder as each lock of shining gold
Changes to hideous life, and 'round me flings
Its stifling circles, winding fold on fold,
While in mine ears her mocking laughter
rings ;
I feel her freezing breath and viper fangs,
For each forgotten kiss a thousand pangs.

THE UNKNOWN LOVE

As IN the City of the Violet Crown

An altar to the Unknown God was raised

Midst shrines of beauty that a world amazed,
And even now in crumbling grandeur frown ;

For well the fine Hellenic hand could gown

The stone with glory ; but while strangers
praised

The peerless piles, the Greek upon them
gazed

Unmoved by all their beauty and renown.

For every sense was sated, and he yearned

For more than soulless marble could contain,

Then did his vague idolatry disown.

So I on Passion's altars long have burned

The incense of my soul ; but all in vain,—

The love I dream of I have never known.

LONE MOUNTAIN

THOU cross-crowned hill, to which I often turn,
Although no dead of mine lie slumbering there,
I watch the western skies behind thee burn,
And my pale lips are parted with a prayer,
Till resignation drives away despair.
With tear-dimmed eyes I gaze and can discern
The silent resting-place for which I yearn,
And unto which with faltering feet I fare.

When I shall rest beneath thee evermore,
And cold, gray fogs drift o'er me from the deep,
Perchance—who knows?—the voices of the
 sea,
Rolling in deep-toned music from the shore,
May not be all unheard in that last sleep,
Murmuring a long, low slumber-song to me.

WEARY

Not as a means of grace,
And hope of glory;—no !
But could I see Thy face,
And hear the blessing flow,
As when Thy living lips the promise poured,
Then would I kneel and wait for mercy, Lord.

Ye weary, come to Me
And I will give you rest.
Have I not bent the knee
And all my soul confessed ?
Art Thou a myth, O God ? or am I blind,
Groping in gloom for peace I cannot find ?

WEARY

Oh, shed one beam of light,
And when my flesh is wrung
Through agony's long night,
When all my life is hung
On Retrospection's cross, and when the spear
Of Conscience strikes my soul, then be Thou near.

Whisper one word of hope,
That my faint heart may know
How with these fears to cope,
And respite gain from woe.
Bind up my wounds and breathe the healing balm
Of one kind word to comfort and to calm.

Not for a heaven unearned,
Nor to escape a hell,
My lips have often burned
To drink of Mercy's well ;
Yearning in that sweet flood themselves to steep,
And drift away from life in dreamless sleep.

PAIN

Now IF this ink were blood, this pen a quill
Torn from some fierce and flesh-fed vulture's
wing,
This sheet a shroud, and mine such matchless skill
As his who o'er the deathless damned did fling
A glory that the ages cannot pale,—
Yea, were these mine, it might not then be vain
To 'prison on this page an anguished wail
Or torture-telling threnody of pain.

But my sore, songless heart doth only groan
Low grief-ground curses through my gnashing
teeth.
Familiar fiend of hell! wherein have I
Sinned more than others, that thou dost bequeath
To me an agony that could atone
For half a world and its salvation buy?

ASHES

To BE carnally-minded is death

To the spirit as well as the clay.

Like a black, blighting frost is the breath

Of the lusts that we love to obey ;

How they lure us and lead us astray !

How they battle for body and soul !

How they riot by night and by day,

And our passionate pulses control !

When the lights and the laughter and song,

And the wine and the women of lust

Teach the blood of our boyhood to long,

Do we dream of the wild whirling gust?

Do we think that Life's apples are dust?

Do we dread the dark dregs in the wine?

No ! we barter Life's bread for a crust

And a draught that is bitter as brine.

ASHES

Recollection may call up the past,
That comfortless mocker of ill,
But it fades in the withering blast
Of the whirlwind's heart-harrowing chill.
For this, oh for this, do we till
And bury the soul in the soil
Of a past that the present doth kill,
Of a future from which we recoil!

Though the flesh may be fed to the fire
Until nothing but ashes remain,
Yet the smouldering coals of desire,
Still lingering, live in the brain.
When the senses are silent or slain,
By Remembrance they're often cajoled,—
Poor Fancy, that forges a chain
Whose links but a skeleton hold!

ASHES

Can the lips that with eagerness drain
The lust-leavened cup to the lees,—
Can the soul with a sensual stain
Ever know the redemption that frees?
Can Passion's extortionate fees,
By the flesh-fettered profligate paid,
The soul in its sorrowing ease,
Or the body in agony aid?

COMPENSATION

YEA, though these trembling limbs should cease
to bear

The drooping body that they now uphold ;
Though life's faint flame should flicker many a
year,

And keep this breathing corpse above the
mould ;

Though I should be of everything bereft,

By friends forsaken, helpless and forlorn,
Methinks as long as life itself were left

All things but one could patiently be borne.

I would not bid the lurking Spoiler stay

His lifted hand if I should live to see

Thy face at last in coldness turn away,

Thy dear familiar lips grow strange to me ;

For when with tender touch my own they greet

Pain is not pain, and sorrow is most sweet.

TEARS

COULD I but crystallize these midnight tears
And gather from their beaded bitterness
A rosary for burning lips to press,
Some pain-born token of these joyless years
To teach the faith that saves, the hope that
cheers ;

Then would I bid these fountains of distress
Flow fast and free, if their sad floods could
bless

Or murmur peace in some poor sufferer's ears.

Have I not known, O God ! have I not felt
The benediction of another's verse

Steal o'er me in the dark and lonely hour?

Hath it not made my stubborn heart to melt,
And turned to prayer the deep rebellious curse,
And soothed my soul to rest with wondrous
power?

ATAXIA

My world has shrunk at last to this small room,
Where like a prisoner I must now remain ;
I'd rather be a captive in the gloom
Of some damp dungeon, tearing at my chain,
For then, perchance, my freedom I might
gain.

Ah God! to think that I must languish here,
Fettered by sickness and subdued by pain,
To die a living death from year to year,
Joy banished from my breast and Sorrow brood-
ing there!

Yet these familiar walls do sometimes fade,—
Then my faint eyes on fair horizons rest ;
By Memory's distant lights I am betrayed,
And Hope a moment flutters in my breast,
Till I forget that I am all unblest.

ATAXIA

My vagrant fancies wander far away,
Fond faces hover near, dear lips are pressed,
My stagnant pulses seem to leap and play
Anew with youth's wild heat and half revive this
clay.

I often think how once these stumbling feet,
That now can scarcely bear me to my bed,
Were swift to follow, as the wind is fleet,
The baleful beam that to destruction led ;
Nor paused I till the luring light had fled,—
Till on mine ears there broke the dismal roar
Of that black stream whose waters wail the
dead ;
Dumb with despair I stood, and from that
shore
Saw Charon's spectre craft and heard his doleful
oar.

ATAXIA

Thou domineering power ! or love, or lust,
Or passion, or whatever else thou art,
How have thy crimson roses turned to dust
And strown their withered leaves upon this
heart !

Though through my vitals now thy venom'd
dart
Strikes like an adder's sting, yet still I feel
From Egypt's fleshpots it is hard to part ;
And my weak, wandering glances often steal
Back to sweet sinful things, until my senses reel.

Sometimes at night around my bed there rise
Fair, faithless loves who in the past were
known ;

But now I look on them with other eyes,
The wanton witches I no longer own ;
They come to mock me as they hear me
moan,

And float a cloud of taunting witnesses.

ATAXIA

Yet were there some, whose arms around me
thrown

As in the olden days, with soft caress,
Could make me half forget these hours of sharp
distress.

I do remind me now of one whose heart

Hath leaped against mine own a thousand
times,

And though we did not find it hard to part,

And years have passed, and now in different
climes

Our lives asunder lie; yet could these
rhymes

Bring back that leman and those long-lost days,

I'd make their strains ascend where angel
chimes

Ring forth glad pæans of eternal praise,

And from the dead, cold past that matchless
minion raise.

ATAXIA

Had Time but halted for us, as the sun
 Stood still on Gibeon while Joshua strove !
Ah no ; the silver moon of Ajalon
 Would have looked kindlier on those nights
 of love !
 Little cared we for sun or moon above,
Or for the gems upon the black-browed night ;
 We may have seen them through the
 heavens move,
But recked not, thought not of their wheeling
 flight,
Blinded, poor love-sick fools ! by Passion's daz-
 zling light.

Oft in that light's fast-fading afterglow
 Her visioned presence unto me appears ;
And as I first beheld her long ago,
 The same alluring loveliness she wears.
Oft in the midnight silence fancy hears

ATAXIA

A sweeter plaint than Pandion's daughter's
 strain,
 Murmur in kisses that beguile my fears,
While in my dreams I clasp her form again,
To wake, alas ! and weep to find the vision vain.

She was but one of an ungodly throng
 Whose name was legion ; but among them all
To her my best and brightest years belong.
 Though there were others whom I oft recall,
 Who wove their shining threads through this
 dark pall
Long years ago in Passion's panting loom,
 Before Life's honeyed cup had turned to
 gall,
Or yet the day had deepened to the gloom
That wraps me like a shroud within this living
 tomb.

ATAXIA

O Marah ! Marah ! as thy bitter stream
Was turned to sweetness by the magic tree,
So the dark current of my years doth seem
To flow at times in murmuring melody.
'Tis when, dear Lyric Maid, I turn to
thee,—
Then the light laughing loves of other days
Hide their false faces or like shadows flee.
Oft had I fallen in these cheerless ways,
But heard the whispered words that comfort and
upraise.

Now though these limbs are cold and almost
dead
And torture runs through every sluggish
vein,
Yet is endurance out of suffering bred
And fortitude to triumph over pain.
The wasted body shrinks, but still the brain

ATAXIA

Urges the palsied hand along the sheet,
On which, alas! tears often fall like rain ;
But Fancy even Misery can cheat,
And in the pain-born rhyme will find a refuge
sweet.

But even there the Spoiler with his scythe
Torments the withered sheaf he waits to
reap ;

His torturing reminders make me writhe,
Till, mad with pain, I beg the final sweep
That surely soon must come to give me
sleep.

Still one retreat is left, to which I flee,—

Dear dreamy draught, in which I often
steep

Body and soul ! I turn again to thee,
And drift down Lethe's stream out on Oblivion's
sea.

CONSOLATION

A SOB of sorrow sounding through the strings
As Recollection ponders on the past,—
Is this the only solace Memory brings
To soothe a soul that shivers in the blast?
How soon the feast was followed by the fast!
How quick the fruits and flowers turned to dust!
How swift the waters sped on which I cast
The bread of life, that cometh back a crust!

A crust! Ah no! though barren is the shore
Of Life's once tempting tide,—whose waters
hold
The dreams of youth that in their depths
were drowned,—
Not fruitless is the flood; its waves restore
What Folly flung to them a thousand-fold
When on the strand some pearl of song is
found.

OUT OF EGYPT

HOPE of the helpless ! Comforter of those
Whose world is walled within the sick man's
room !

Lord God of Love and Mercy ! unto whom
Pale prisoners of pain come with their woes ;
I thank Thee for the cheering light that throws
Its blessed beam at last across the gloom,—
A cloud by day, a fire by night, it glows,
Hope's pilot pillars that my path illumine.

Oh, if it be Thy will that I should make
My way from out the durance of despair,
Though to full strength I never may attain,
Yea, even though these links I may not break,
Let me remember still in grateful prayer
The Love that for a season loosed the
chain.

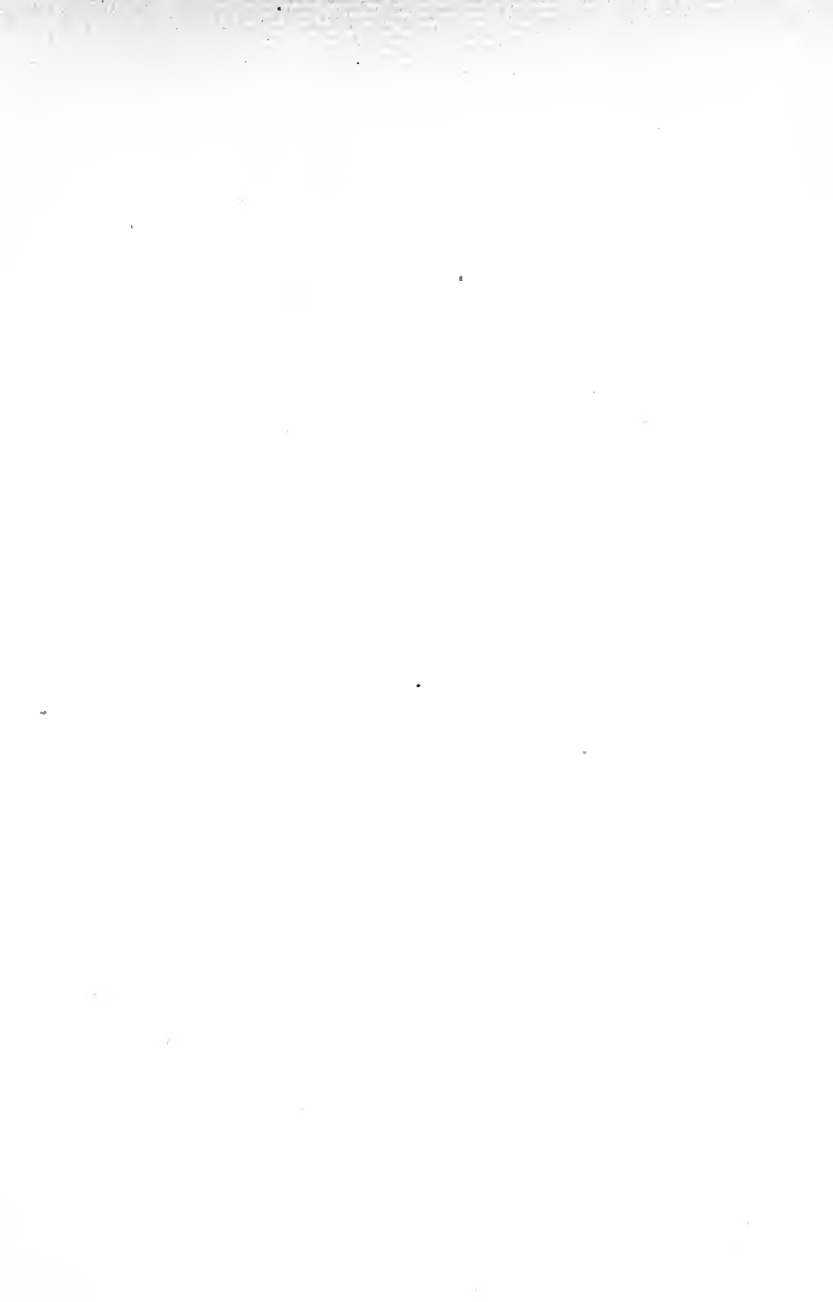
THE LOOM

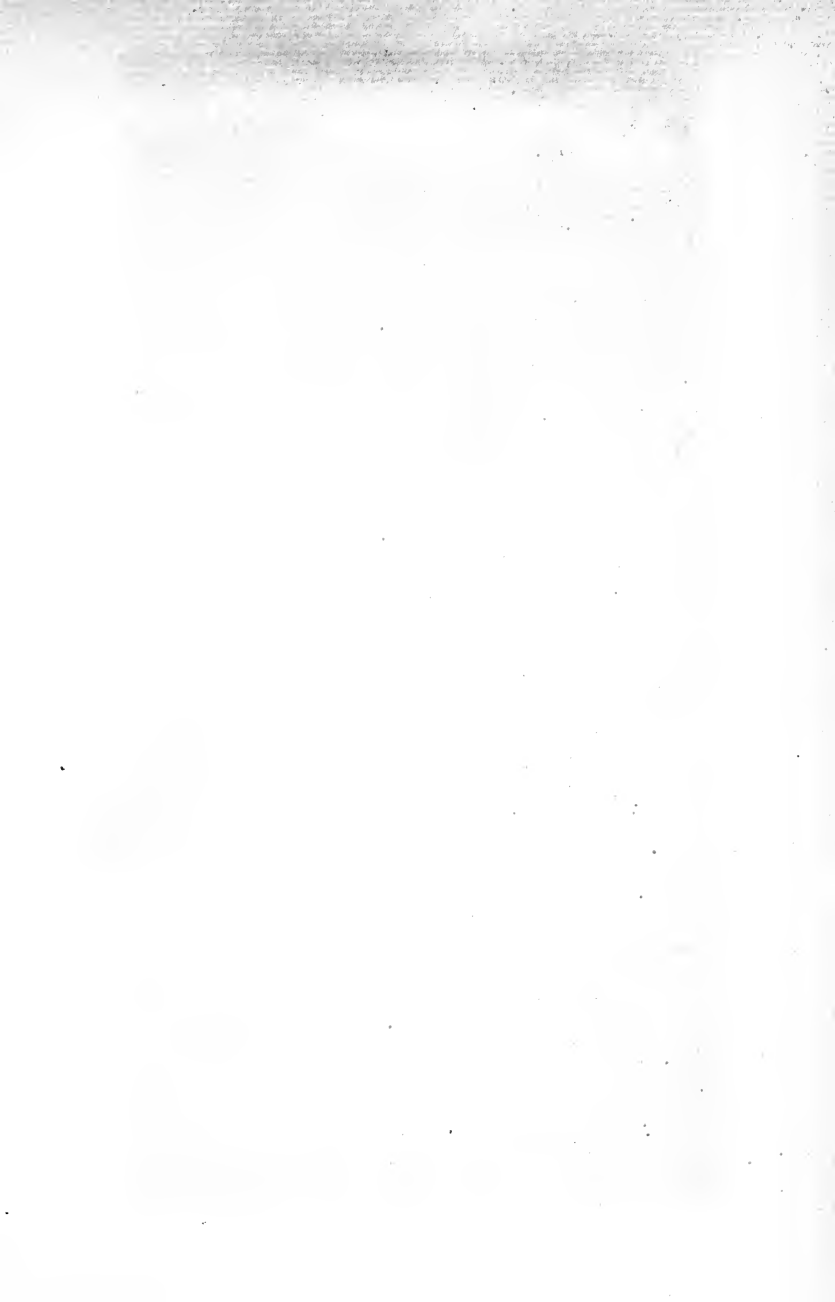
A WEARIED weaver at the loom, I gaze
On that which I have woven till mine eyes
Grow dim to see the fabric it displays ;
The warp of all my work seems woofed with
sighs.

No more for me Life's shuttle swiftly flies,
But falters feebly through the fibred maze
As thread on thread it slowly multiplies,
Weaving, alas ! a weft of dreary days.

For in the woven meshes there appears
The sombre shade of sorrow. Do I weave
But sackcloth for my soul ? And am I now
But one who gloats upon the garb he wears,—
Who in the shadow sits apart to grieve,
The ashes of his life upon his brow ?







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